



D E S M O N D.

A

N O V E L,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

B Y

C H A R L O T T E S M I T H.

VOLUME I.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON,

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P R E F A C E.

IN sending into the world a work so unlike those of my former writings, which have been honored by its approbation, I feel some degree of that apprehension which an Author is sensible of on a first publication.

This arises partly from my doubts of succeeding so well in letters as in narrative; and partly from a supposition, that there are Readers, to whom the fictitious occurrences, and others to whom the political remarks in these volumes may be displeasing.

VoL. I.

A

To

To the first I beg leave to suggest, that in representing a young man, nourishing an ardent but concealed passion for a married woman ; I certainly do not mean to encourage or justify such attachments ; but no delineation of character appears to me more interesting, than that of a man capable of such a passion so generous and disinterested as to seek only the good of its object ; nor any story more moral, than one that represents the existence of an affection so regulated.

As to the political passages dispersed through the work, they are for the most part, drawn from conversations to which I have been a witness, in England, and France, during the last twelve months. In carrying on my story in those countries, and at a period
when

when their political situation (but particularly that of the latter) is the general topic of discourse in both ; I have given to my imaginary characters the arguments I have heard on both sides ; and if those in favor of one party have evidently the advantage, it is not owing to my partial representation, but to the predominant power of truth and reason, which can neither be altered nor concealed.

But women it is said have no business with politics—Why not?—Have they no interest in the scenes that are acting around them, in which they have fathers, brothers, husbands, sons, or friends engaged?—Even in the commonest course of female education, they are expected to acquire some knowledge of history ; and yet, if

they are to have no opinion of what *is* passing, it avails little that they should be informed of what *has passed*, in a world where they are subject to such mental degradation; where they are censured as affecting masculine knowledge if they happen to have any understanding; or despised as insignificant triflers if they have none.

Knowledge, which qualifies women to speak or to write on any other than the most common and trivial subjects, is supposed to be of so difficult attainment, that it cannot be acquired but by the sacrifice of domestic virtues, or the neglect of domestic duties.—*I* however may safely say, that it was in the *observance*, not in the *breach* of duty, *I* became an Author; and it has happened, that the circumstances which
have

have compelled me to write, have introduced me to those scenes of life, and those varieties of character which I should otherwise never have seen : Tho' alas ! it is from thence, that I am too well enabled to describe from *immediate* observation,

“ The proud man's contumely, th' oppressors
wrong ;
The laws delay, the insolence of office.”

But, while in consequence of the affairs of my family, being most unhappily in the power of men who *seem to exercise all these with impunity*, I am become an *Author by profession*, and feel every year more acutely, “ *that hope delayed maketh the heart sick.*” I am sensible also (to use another quotation) that

———“ Adversity—

Tho’ like a toad ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in its head.”

For it is to my involuntary appearance in that character, that I am indebted, for all that makes my continuance in the world desirable; all that softens the rigor of my destiny and enables me to sustain it: I mean friends among those, who, while their talents are the boast of their country, are yet more respectable for the goodness and integrity of their hearts.

Among these I include a female friend, to whom I owe the beautiful little Ode in the last volume; who having written it for this work, allows me thus publicly to boast of a friendship, which is the pride and pleasure of my life.

If

If I may be indulged a moment longer in my egotism, it shall be only while I apologize for the typographical errors of the work, which may have been in some measure occasioned by the detached and hurried way, in which the sheets were sometimes sent to the press when I was at a distance from it ; and when my attention was distracted by the troubles, which it seems to be the peculiar delight of the persons who are concerned in the management of my childrens affairs, to inflict upon me. With all this the Public have nothing to do : but were it proper to relate all the disadvantages from anxiety of mind and local circumstances, under which these volumes have been composed, such a detail might be admitted as an excuse for more material errors.

For

For that asperity of remark, which will arise on the part of those whose political tenets I may offend, I am prepared; those who object to the matter, will probably arraign the manner, and exclaim against the impropriety of making a book of entertainment the vehicle of political discussion. I am however conscious that in making these slight sketches, of manners and opinions, as they fluctuated around me; I have not sacrificed truth to any party—Nothing appears to me more respectable than national pride; nothing so absurd as national prejudice—And in the faithful representation of the manners of other countries, surely Englishmen may find abundant reason to indulge the one, while they conquer the other. To those however who still cherish the idea of our having a
natural

natural enemy in the French nation; and that they are still more *naturally* our foes, because they have dared to be freemen, I can only say, that against the phalanx of prejudice kept in constant pay, and under strict discipline by interest, the slight skirmishing of a novel writer can have no effect: we see it remains hitherto unbroken against the powerful efforts of learning and genius—though united in that cause which *must* finally triumph—the cause of truth, reason, and humanity.

CHARLOTTE SMITH.

London,
June 20, 1792.

ERRATA.

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- Page 53. line 22. *for* subsect, *read* subject
 74. — 13. — Digby, *r.* Danby
 90. — 21. — companion, *r.* champion
 98. — ult. — *dele* there
 109. — 8. — “*mais il y a encore trop,*”
r. “*mais il y'en a encore trop*”
 111. — 20. — renewing, *r.* mewing
ibid. — 22 — unsealing, *r.* unscaling
 116. — 19. — *Palais Royale*, *r.* *Palais*
Royal
 120. — 16. — immortality, *r.* immo-
 rality
 131. — 8. — *chere amie*, *r.* *cheres amies*
 133. — 13 — rendered worthy of that
 blood he is ready to sacrifice to pre-
 serve it, *r.* a country sensible of the
 value of the blood he is ready to shed
 for its freedom
 140. — 6. — even, *r.* ever
 143. — 8. — so favourable a picture,
r. the most favourable pictures that can
 be drawn of these monarchs
 150. — 24. — *œconomica*, *r.* *œcono-*
mical
 151. — 13. — inteference, *r.* interfer-
 ence
 152. — 5. — liberty at all of their
 own, *r.* liberty of their own
ibid. — 20. — to, *r.* of
 154. — 14. — years I had served, *r.*
 years before I had served

E R R A T A.

- Page 156. line 6. *for* refoming, *r.* reforming
 159. ——— 7. ——— iuduced, *r.* induced
 160. ——— 14. ——— lifelefs, *r.* tastelefs
 161. ——— 6. ——— retutn, *r.* return
 185. ——— 6. ——— pleasure, *r.* pleasures
 202. ——— 2. ——— it would, *r.* it will
ibid. ——— 14. ——— and the evening, *r.* and
 it was the evening
 207. ——— 21. ——— were, *r.* where
 231. ——— 21. ——— indication, *r.* vindica-
 tion
 240. ——— 3. ——— *viellee*, *r.* *vieille*
ibid. ——— 11. ——— auxillary, *r.* auxiliary
ibid. ——— 19. ——— *veille*, *r.* *vieille*

V O L II.

- Page 1. line 9. *for* is my lot, *r.* or is it my lot
 53. ——— 19. ——— well, *r.* will
 85. ——— 17. ——— discourfe, *r.* courfe
 92. ——— 18. ——— Limwell, *r.* Linwell.
 94. ——— 7. ——— mouth of honor, *r.*
 mouth honor
 117. ——— 23. ——— vue, *r.* vu
 137. ——— 16. ——— raifon, *r.* raifonnet
 174. ——— 3. ——— damfels, *r.* a damfel
 200. ——— 20. ——— ploughs, *r.* plough

V O L III.

- Page 128. line 1. *for* fcenes, *r.* fcene
 142. ——— 13. ——— par ceux, *r.* ce ceux
 211. ——— 4. ——— La vrai puiffance, & la
 vrai politeffe, *r.* La vraie puiffance,
 & la vraie politeffe

D E S M O N D.

L E T T E R I.

T O M R. B E T H E L.

June 9, 1793.

YOUR arguments, my friend, were decisive ; and since I am now on my way—I hardly know whither, you will be convinced that I attended to them ; and have determined to relinquish the dangerous indulgence, of contemplating the perfections of an object, that can never be mine. Yes!—I have torn myself from her ; and, without betraying any part of the anguish and regret I felt, I calmly took my leave! —It was five days ago, the morning after she had undergone the fatiguing ceremony of appearing, for the first time since her marriage, at court on the birth-night.—

V O L. I.

B

I had

I had heard how universally she had been admired, but she seemed to have received no pleasure from that admiration—and I felt involuntarily pleased that she had not.—Her husband—I hate the name—Verney; had already escaped from the confinement, which this ceremony of their appearances had for a day or two imposed upon him: and was gone to I know not what races; she named the place faintly and reluctantly when I asked after him; and I did not repeat the question: there was however another question which I could not help asking myself; does this man deserve the lovely Geraldine?—Alas!—I know he does not; cannot: the sport of every wild propensity or rather of every prevailing fashion, (for it is to that he sacrifices rather than to his own inclinations) I have too much reason to believe he will dissipate his fortune, and render his wife miserable.—But is it possible she can love him?—Oh, no!—it is surely not possible—when through the mild grace
3 and

and sometimes tenderness of her manner, I remark the strength and clearness of her understanding; when I observe, how immediately she sees the ridiculous, and how quickly her ingenious and liberal mind shrinks from vice and folly—I believe it impossible that the hour can be far distant, if indeed it is not already arrived; when the flowers, with which the mercenary hands of her family, dressed the chains they imposed upon her, will be totally faded; and when, whatever affection she now feels for him, if any does exist, will be destroyed by the conviction of Verney's unworthiness—Ah! where will then an heart, like hers, find refuge against the horrors of such a destiny—would to heaven I had become acquainted with her before that destiny was irrevocable—or that I had never known her at all.

When I was admitted to her dressing-room the last time I saw her—she was reading; and laid down her book on my entrance—I was ill, or had appeared so

to her; when I had seen her a few days before—she seemed now to recollect it with tender interest—and when, in answering her enquiries, I told her I intended going abroad for some months; I should have thought—had I dared to indulge the flattery of fancy—that she heard it with concern, “we shall not then see you this year in Kent,” said she, “I am very sorry for it,”—she paused a moment, and added, with one of those smiles which give such peculiar charms to her countenance, “but I hope you will regain your health and spirits—and I think we shall certainly have you among us again in the shooting season.”—I know not what was the matter with me, but I could not answer her; and the conversation for some moments dropped.

She resumed it after another short silence, and asked me when I had seen her brother?—He talks, “said she,” of going to the Continent also this summer, and I wish you may meet him there—your acquaintance could not fail of being advantageous
in

in any country, but particularly a foreign country, to a young man so new to the world as he is; and one, so unsettled in all his plans, from temper and habit, that I am ever in pain lest he should fall into those errors, which I every day see so fatal to those who enter into the world unexperienced like him—without a guide.—Should you happen to meet with him abroad, I am sure you have friendship enough for us all, to direct him.”—

I seized with avidity an opportunity of being serviceable to any one who belongs to her—I had not seen Waverly for some time, and imagined he was gone back to Oxford; but I assured her, that if Mr. Waverly could make it convenient to go when I did to Paris, I should be extremely glad to be useful to him, and happy in his company.

Pleased with the earnest manner in which I spoke, she became more unreserved on this subject. “You know a little of my brother,” said she, “but it is im-

possible, on so slight an acquaintance, to be aware of the peculiarities of his temper—peculiarities that give me so many fears on his account.—It is not his youth, or the expensive style in which he sets out, that disquiet me so much as that uncommon indecision of mind, which never allows him to know what he will do a moment before he acts; and some how or other he always continues, after long debates and repeated changes, to adopt the very worst scheme of those he has examined. I may say to you that this defect originated in the extreme indulgence of his parents—a very considerable part of my father's estate would have gone into another branch of the family, had he not had a son—and it happened his six eldest children were daughters, so that when this long wished-for and only son was born, he became of more consequence to my father and mother than the rest of their family: and we, his three sisters, who survived, have through our lives hitherto uniformly seen our interest yield to his.

—But,

—But, believe me, we should never have murmured, (at least I can answer for myself)—at whatever sacrifices have been made, had they contributed to render him really and permanently happier, but the continual enquiries that were made of what he would do, and what he would like, while nothing was ever offered to him but variety of gratification, have, I think, coincided with his natural temper to produce that continual inability, to pursue any study or even any pleasure steadily.—My father's death, and his being of age, have rendered him master of himself and his fortune ; but he cannot resolve what to do with either of them, and my apprehensions are, that he will fall into the hands of those who will determine for him, and dispose of both, rather for their own advantage than for his. I have therefore encouraged, as much as possible, his half-formed inclination to go abroad—but he talks so vaguely about it, and varies so much in his projects, that I doubt whether he will

ever execute any of them.—If you really would allow him to accompany you—yet I know not how to ask it, your society would perhaps determine him to the journey, and prevent his meeting any of those inconveniencies to which young travellers are exposed.”

I believe my lovely friend mistook the expression which my eager acquiescence threw into my countenance, for what might be produced by the embarrassment, of wishing to escape with civility from an unwelcome proposal—for she hesitated—yet, without giving me time to reply, said, “but perhaps I am taking a very improper liberty with you—I ought to have recollected, that in this expedition you have probably a party, to which any addition may be unwelcome; and that you have sought an acquaintance with my brother”—

I interrupted her.—“It is enough for me, that he is your brother—that alone would make me wish to render him every service in my power—even if I had never
seen.

seen him.”—I had said more than I ought : more than I intended to say.—I felt instantly conscious of it, and I now confusedly hurried into professions of personal regard for Waverly, far enough from being sincere ; and assurances, that, as I went for change of air and scene, which my health and spirits required, I should make no party, unless it was with one friend, to whom my society might be useful—“ and when that friend,” added I, “is your brother.”—I was relapsing fast into the folly, of which, but a moment before, I repented.—I saw her change colour, and for the first time since the rise of this attachment—which will end only with my life—I had said, what to a vain woman might have betrayed it.

Geraldine seemed now solicitous to change the conversation, but this I would not do, till I had made her promise to write to her brother, as soon as she could learn where he was ; and mention to him

my intended journey, and my readiness to begin it with him immediately.

I assured her, that if I met Waverly before I left London, I would endeavour to fix his departure with me, and giving her my address, that he might write to me at Margate, reluctantly, and with pangs, such as are felt only when “soul and body part”—I bade her adieu!

She looked concerned, and gave me her lovely hand, which I dared not press to my lips—but, as trembling, I held it in mine, she wished me health and happiness, a pleasant journey, and a prosperous return, in that soul-soothing voice which I always hear with undefinable emotions.—More tremulously sweet than usual, it still vibrates in my ears, and I still repeat to myself her last words—“Farewell, Mr. Desmond, may all felicity attend you.”

Now, you will call this wrong, ridiculous, and romantic.—But spare your remonstrances, dear Bethel, since I obey
you

you in essentials, and am going from England, rather because you desire it, than because I am convinced that such an affection as I feel, ought to be eradicated.—Do you know against how many vices, and how many follies, a passion, so pure and ardent as mine, fortifies the heart?—Are you sure that the evils you represent, as attending it, are not purely imaginary, while the good is real?—I expect, however, a heavy lecture for all this, and it were better not to add another word on the subject.

Your's ever, with true regard,

LIONEL DESMOND.

I forgot to add, that though my journey is certainly decided upon, because I hope to find, in the present political tumult in France, what may interest and divert my attention; yet, I will not fail to deliver to your relations the letter you enclosed in your last—and to avail myself of it as an introduction to Mrs. Fairfax,

and her family, as soon as I arrive at Margate.—You imagine, that the charms of one or other of your fair cousins will have power enough to drive, from my heart, an inclination which you so entirely disapprove—though I am too well convinced of the inefficacy of the recipe, I try it you see—in deference to your opinion—just as a patient, who knows his disease to be incurable, submits to the prescription of a physician he esteems.—As soon as I have delivered my credentials you shall hear from me again.

L E T-

L E T T E R II.

T O M R. D E S M O N D.

Hartfield, June 13, 1790.

YES!—you have really given an instance of extreme prudence—and, in consequence of it, you will, I think, have occasion to exert another virtue, which is by no means the most eminent among those you possess; the virtue of patience.—So!—you have really undertaken the delightful office of bear-leader—because the brother of your Geraldine cannot take care of himself—and this you call setting about your cure, while you continue to dispute, whether it be wise to be cured or no—and, while you argue that a passion for another man's wife may save you from abundance of vice and folly, you strengthen your argument to be sure wonderfully, by committing one of the greatest acts of folly in your power.—And as to
vice,

vice, I hold it, my good friend, to be a great advance towards it, when you betray symptoms (which no woman can fail to understand) of this wild and romantic passion of yours, or, as you sentimentally term it, this ardent and pure attachment—an attachment and an arrangement I think are the terms now in use, I beg pardon if I do not always put them in the right place.

But seriously—do you know what you have undertaken in thus engaging yourself with Waverly?—and can you bear to be made uneasy by the caprices of a man who is of twenty minds in a moment, without ever being in his right mind.—Your only chance of escaping, as you have now managed the matter is, that he will never determine whether he shall go with you or no.—Some scampering party will be proposed to a cricket match in Hampshire, or a race in Yorkshire; one friend will invite him to a ball in the West of England, and another to see a boxing match in the neighbourhood of London:
and

and while he is debating whether he shall make any of these engagements, or which, or go to France with you, you will have a very fair opportunity of leaving him—unless (which from the style of your last letter I do not expect) you should yourself change your resolution on the best grounds; and find your romantic and your patriotic motive for a journey to France, conquered at once by the more powerful enchantments of one of my fair cousins.

While, from your fortune being entrusted to my management by your grandfather till you were five-and-twenty, I considered myself as your guardian, I forbore to recommend to either of these young women, because they were my relations—But now as you are master alike of yourself and of your estate, yet are still willing to attend (at least you say you are) to the opinion of a friend who has lived fourteen years longer in the world than you have. I am desirous that you should become acquainted with them, and that you should
judge

judge fairly, since that must be to judge favourably, of women who are so universally and justly admired; who certainly are most highly accomplished: and have fortunes to assist whoever they marry, in supporting them in that rank of life to which they will do so much honour—this you call an extraordinary style of advice, from a man who, in the noon of life, has renounced that world, whose attractions herecommends to you; but that, at hardly nine-and-thirty, I have no longer any relish for it, arises, not from general misanthropy, but from particular misfortune, and against those calamities of domestic life that have embittered *my* days, I wish to guard yours—by giving you some of my dearly-bought experience.

You have talents, youth, health, person and fortune—a good heart and an ardent imagination—these, my dear Desmond, are advantages very rarely united, and when they do meet, all the first are too often lost by the fatal and irregular indulgence

D E S M O N D. 17

gence of the last. This is what I fear for you—but my lecture must terminate with my paper—my good wishes ever follow you; let me hear from you soon—and believe me ever

Yours,

E. BETHEL.

L E T.

L E T T E R I I I .

T O M R . B E T H E L .

Margate, June 16, 1792.

MY visit to your friends is paid, and I met such a reception as I might expect from your recommendation—would I could tell you, that it has answered all the friendly expectations, or rather hopes, you formed of it: but you expect an ingenuous account of my sentiments in regard to these ladies; and you shall have them.

Mrs. Fairfax has been certainly a very fine woman, and even now has personal advantages enough to authorise her retaining those pretensions, which it is easy to see she would, with extreme reluctance, entirely resign.—It is however but justice to add, that her unwillingness to fade, does not influence her to keep back the period when it is fit her daughters should bloom—she rather runs into the contrary extreme; and

and with solicitude, which her maternal affection renders rather an amiable weakness, she is always bustling about, to shew them to the best advantage ; and, as she is perfectly convinced that they are the most accomplished young women of the age, so she is very desirous of impressing that conviction on all her acquaintance—for the rest I believe she may be a very good woman ; and I have only to object to a little too much parade about it ; and that she talks rather too loud—and rather too long.

My first introduction to her was not at her own house, for entering one of the libraries about two o'clock on Thursday noon, I observed, that the attention of the few people who so early in the season assemble there, was engrossed by a lady who was relating a very long story about herself, in a tone of voice, against which, whatever had been the subject, no degree of attention to any other could have been a defence. I was compelled therefore, instead of reading the paper where I was
anxious

anxious to see French news, to join the audience who were hearing—how her lease was out, of an house she had in Harley Street, and all the conversation held between herself, her landlord, and her attorney about its renewal. But how at last they could not agree; and so she had taken another in Manchester Square, which she described at full length—“The Dutcheffs,” continued she, “and lady Lindores, and lady Sarah, were *all so delighted* when they found I had determined upon it—and lady Susan assured me it would delay at least her winter’s journey to Bath—Oh! my dear Mrs. Fairfax, said lady Susan, you have no notion now, how excessively happy we shall all be, to have you *so* near us—and your sweet girls!—their society is a delightful acquisition—Miss Fairfax’s singing is charming, and I do dote upon Anastatia’s manner of reading poetry, that I hope we shall see a great deal of both of them.”—

Though I at once knew that this was the lady, to whom I was fortunate enough to
have

have a letter of recommendation in my pocket, it was not easy with all that *mauvais hôte* with which you so frequently accuse me, to find a favourable moment to make my bow and my speech, between the end of one narrative and the beginnning of another, with such amazing rapidity did they follow each other : and I should have retired without being able to seize any such lucky interval, if this inexhaustible stream of eloquence had not been interrupted by the sudden entrance of a young man who seemed to be one of Mrs. Fairfax's intimate acquaintance, and who said he came to tell her, that a raffle, in which she was engaged at another shop, was full, and that her daughters had sent him to desire she would come. "There is nobody now, madam, to throw," said this gentleman, "but you and I; and Miss Anastatia being the highest number, thinks she shall win the jars—but as for me, I cannot go back this morning, for I am engaged to ride"—"Oh, but I desire you will," replied

Mrs

Mrs. Fairfax, "it wont take you up a minute, and I will have it decided—for I hate suspense."—"Yes, madam," said another gentleman who had been among the listeners, "you may hate it—but there is nothing that Waverly loves so much, if one may judge by the difficulty he always makes about deciding upon every thing—and if the determination of the raffle depends upon him, you will hardly know who the jars are to belong to this season."—"I protest, Jack Lewis," cried Waverly, whom I now immediately knew, though his cropped hair and other singularities of dress had at first prevented my recollecting him—"I protest you do me injustice—I am the steadiest creature in life—and I would go now willingly—but upon my soul I'm past my appointment."

"And what signifies your appointment?" replied the other.—"What signifies whether you keep it or no?"—"Why, that's true," answered my future fellow-traveller, "to be sure it is of no great consequence,

consequence, neither—so if you desire it, I'll go with you, Ma'am, though really I hardly know."—He was beginning to hesitate again, but Mrs. Fairfax took him at his word, and they went out together; however, before they had reached the place where the possession of the China jars was to be decided, I saw Waverly leave the lady, and go I suppose to keep the engagement, which he allowed a moment before was of no consequence. As for myself, as soon as I recovered from the effects of the first impression made by Mrs. Fairfax's oratory, which perhaps the weakness or irritability of my nerves rendered more forcible than it ought to be, I collected courage enough to follow her; and in a momentary pause that succeeded her losing her raffle, which would now have been finally settled, she said, had Waverly been present, I advanced and delivered your letter.

She received it most graciously; and even retired from the groups she was engaged

gaged in, to read it. I took that opportunity of addressing myself to Miss Fairfax, who is certainly a very pretty woman; she seemed however cold and reserved; and, I thought, put on that sort of air which says—"I don't know, Sir, whether you are in style of life to claim my notice." These little doubts, however, which I readily forgave, were immediately dissipated, when your mother appeared with your letter in her hand—and said, "Margarette, my dear, this is Mr. Desmond—the friend and ward of Mr. Bethel, I am sure you will be as rejoiced as I am in this opportunity of being honoured by his acquaintance."—I saw instantly, that the young lady recollected, in the friend and ward of Mr. Bethel, a man of large, independent fortune.—The most amiable expression of complacency was immediately conveyed into her countenance; and, as I attended her and her mother home, I perceived that two or three gentlemen, who came with her also, and towards whom she

had before been lavish of her smiles, were now almost neglected, while she was so good as to attend only to me.—At the door of their lodgings I took my leave of them, after receiving the very obliging invitation to dine with them the next day. Anastatia was not with them. Miss Fairfax told me, that, as soon as she had thrown for the jars, she went home, “for Anastatia, said she, is excessively fond of reading and reciting—and, her reading master, a celebrated actor at one of the theatres, happening to be here by accident, she would not lose the opportunity of receiving a lesson. “She does excel, assuredly, said the elder lady, in those accomplishments, as Mr. Desmond, I think will say, when he hears her.”—I expressed my satisfaction at the prospect of being so gratified, and then took my leave.

Yesterday morning I saw Waverly, who seemed to embrace, with avidity, the project of going with me to Paris—I represented to him the necessity of his knowing, precisely, his own mind, as I

cannot remain here more than four or five days.—He assures me, that nothing can prevent his going, and that he will instantly set about making preparations.—Indeed, my good friend, you were too severe upon him.—He is young, and quite without experience, but he seems to have a good disposition, and an understanding capable of improvement.—There is too, a family resemblance to his sister, which, though slight, and rather a flying than a fixed likeness, interests me for him; and in short, I am more desirous of curing than of reckoning his faults.

He dined with Mrs. Fairfax yesterday, where I was also invited, and where a party of nine or ten were assembled. The captivating sisters displayed all their talents, and I own they excel in almost every accomplishment.—I have seldom seen a finer figure taken altogether, than the younger sister, and indeed, your description of the personal beauty of both, was not exaggeration.—To their acquirements,

ments, I have already done justice : yet, I am convinced, that, with all these advantages, my heart, were it totally free from every other impression, would never become devoted to either.

It would be nonsense to pretend to give reasons for this.—With these caprices of the imagination, and of the heart, you have allowed that Reason has very little to do.

{ One objection however, to my pretending to either of these ladies, would be, that very degree of excellence on which you seem to dwell.—Always surrounded by admiring multitudes ; or, practising those accomplishments by which that admiration is acquired, they seem to be in danger of forgetting they have hearts—appearing to feel no preference for any person, but those who have the sanction of fashion, or the recommendation of great property ; and, affluent as they are themselves, to consider only among the men that surround them, who are the likeliest

to raise them to higher affluence or superior rank.

Of this I had a specimen yesterday—Waverly seems to have an inclination for Miss Fairfax, and as he and I were the two young men in the party of yesterday, who seemed the most worthy the notice of the two young ladies, I was so fortunate as to be allowed to entertain Miss Anastatia, while Waverly was engaged in earnest discourse by Miss Fairfax, who put on all those fascinating airs which she so well knows how to assume.—I saw that poor Waverly was considering whether he should not be violently in love with her, or adhere to the more humble beauty, for whom he had been relating his *penchant* to me a few hours before, when the door suddenly opened, and a tall young fellow, very dirty, and apparently very drunk, was shewn into the room.—The looks of all the ladies testified their satisfaction: and they all eagerly exclaimed, “ Oh !
my

my lord, when did you arrive, who expected you?—how did you come?”—Without, however, attending immediately to these questions, he shook the two young ladies’ hands, called them familiarly by their Christian names : and then throwing himself at his length on a sofa, he thus answered—“ Came!—why, curse me if I hardly know how I came here—for I have not been in bed these three nights—Why, I came with Davers, and Lenham, and a parcel of us.—We were going to settle a wager at Tom Felton’s—But, rat me, if I know why the plague we came through this damned place, twenty miles at least out of our way.—How in the devil’s name do ye contrive to live here, why, here is not a soul to be seen?”—Then, without waiting for an answer to this elegant exordium, he suddenly snatched the hand of the eldest Miss Fairfax, who sat near him, and cried, “ But, by the Lord, my sweet Peggy, you look confoundedly handsome—curse me if you don’t.—By

Jove, I believe I shall be in love with you myself.—What!—so you have got out of your megrims and sickness, eh!—and are quite well, you dear little toad you, eh?”—The soft and smiling answer which the lady gave to an address so impertinently familiar, convinced me she was not displeased with it; the mother seemed equally satisfied; and I saw, that even the sentimental Anastatia forgot the critique on the last fashionable novel, with which she had a moment before been obliging me; and cast a look of solicitude towards that part of the room, where this newly-arrived visitor, whom they called Lord Newminster, was talking to her sister in the style of which I have given you an example—while poor Waverly, who had at once lost all his consequence, sat silent and mortified, or if he diffidently attempted to join in the conversation, obtained no notice from the lady, and only a stare of contemptuous enquiry from the lord.—As, notwithstanding

ing the favor I had found a few hours before, I now seemed to be sinking fast into the same insignificance, I thought it better to avoid a continuance of such mortification, by taking my leave; Waverly, as he accompanied me home, could hardly conceal his vexation—yet was unwilling to shew it: while I doubt not but Mrs. Fairfax and the young ladies were happily entertained the rest of the evening by the delectable conversation of Lord Newminster.

I shall probably write once more from hence.

Your's, ever and truly,

L. D.

L E T-

L E T T E R IV.

T O M R. D E S M O N D.

Hartfield, June 20, 1790.

I AM sorry my prescription is not likely to succeed ; I had persuaded myself that the youngest of my fair cousins, was the likeliest of any woman of my acquaintance, to become the object of a reasonable attachment.—Surely Desmond you are fastidious—you expect what you will never find, the cultivated mind and polished manners of refined society, with the simplicity and unpretending modesty of retired life—they are incompatible—they cannot be united ; and this model of perfection, which you have imagined, and can never obtain, will be a source of unhappiness to you through life.

I told you in a former letter, that I would endeavour to give you a little of my dearly-bought experience.—You know
that

that I have been unhappy; but you are probably quite unacquainted with the sources from whence that unhappiness originates—in relating them to you I may perhaps convince you, that ignorance and simplicity are no securities against the evils which you seem to apprehend in domestic life; and that the woman, who is suddenly raised from humble mediocrity to the gay scenes of fashionable splendor, is much more likely to be giddily intoxicated than one who has from her infancy been accustomed to them.

At one and twenty, and at the close of a long minority, which had been passed under the care of very excellent guardians, I became master of a very large sum of ready money, and an estate the largest and best conditioned that any gentleman possessed in the county where it lay.—I was at that time very unlike the sober fellow I now appear—and the moment I was free from the restraint of those friends, to whose guardianship my father had left me, I

rushed into all the dissipation that was going forward, and became one of the gayest men at that time about town.

With such a fortune it was not difficult to be introduced into "the very first world."—The illustrious adventurers and titled gamblers, of whom that world is composed, found me an admirable subject for them ; while the women, who were then either the most celebrated ornaments of the circle where I moved, or were endeavouring to become so, were equally solicitous to obtain my notice—and the unmarried part of them seemed generously willing to forget my want of title in favour of my twelve or thirteen thousand a year.—I had, however, at a very early period of my career, conceived an affection, or according to your phrase, an ardent attachment to a married woman of high rank—but I had at the same time seen enough of them all, to determine never to marry any of them myself.

Two years experience confirmed me in
1 this

this resolution, but by the end of that time I was relieved from the embarrassments of a large property.—In the course of the first, the turf and the hazard table had disburthened me of all my ready money ; and, at the conclusion of the second, my estate was reduced to something less than one half.—I then found that I was not, by above one half, so great an object to my kind friends as I had been—and, when soon afterwards I was compelled to pay five thousand pounds for my sentimental attachment—when the obliging world represented my affairs infinitely worse than they were, and I became afraid of looking into them myself, I found the period rapidly approaching when to this circle I should become no object at all.

My pride now effected that, which common sense had attempted in vain ; and I determined to quit a society into which I should never have entered.—I went down to my house in the country where almost all my estate lay ; sent for the attorney who

had the care of my property, and with a sort of desperate resolution resolved to know the worst.

This lawyer, whose father had been steward to mine, and to whom at his death the stewardship had been given by my guardians, was a clear headed, active and intelligent man: and when he saw himself entrusted with fuller powers to act in my business than he had till then possessed, he set about it so earnestly and assiduously, that he very soon got successfully through two law suits of great importance: raised my rents without oppressing my tenants—disposed of such timber as could be sold without prejudice to the principal estate—fold off part of what was mortgaged to redeem and clear the rest; and so regulated my affairs, that in a few months, from the time of his entirely undertaking them, I found myself relieved from every embarrassment, and still possessed of an estate of more than five thousand pounds a year. The seven that I had thrown away gave me

me however some of the severe pangs that are inflicted by mortified pride.—Nabobs and rich citizens became the ostentatious possessors of manors and royalties in the same county, which were once mine; and some of my estates—estates that had been in my family since the conquest, now lent their names to barons by recent purchase, and dignified mushroom nobility.

I fled therefore from public meetings, where I only found subjects of self-reproach, and made acquaintance with another set of people, among whom I was still considered as a man of great fortune; and where I found more attention, and, as I believed, more friendship than I had ever experienced in superior societies.

More general information and more understanding I certainly found; and none of my new friends possessed a greater share of both than my solicitor, Mr. Stamford—he had deservedly obtained my confidence, and I was now often at his house, which his
family

family seemed to vie in trying, to render agreeable to me.

His wife was pleasing and good humoured, and he had several sisters, some married, and two single, who occasionally visited at his house; and it was not difficult to see, that in the eyes of the latter, Mr. Bethel, with his reduced fortune, was a man of greater consequence than he had ever appeared to the high born damsels among whom he had lived in the meridian of his prosperity.

I was not however flattered by their attention or attracted by their coquetry—they were pretty enough, and not without sense, but they had both been very much in London; and I thought too deeply initiated, if not into very fashionable societies, yet into the style of those which catch, with imitative emulation, the manners and ideas those societies give.—Mr. Stamford seemed desirous of giving both these ladies a chance of success with me, for they were alternately brought forward for about
twelve

twelve months—at the end of which time they were both perhaps convinced that they had neither of them any great prospect of it, for then the family of a widow sister was invited, none of whom I had ever seen, or hardly heard mentioned before.

The father of this family, a lieutenant in the army, had married the eldest of Stamford's sisters, when he was recruiting in the town where she then lived—by which he so greatly disoblged the friends on whom he depended, that though he had a very large family, they never afforded him afterwards the least assistance; and about two years before the period I now speak of, he had died at Jamaica, leaving his widow and seven children, with very little more than the pension allowed by government to subsist upon.—Of these children the two eldest were daughters; who, from the obscure village their mother was compelled to inhabit in Wales, were now come to pass the winter at the house of their uncle in a large provincial town.—On entering one morning Stamford's parlour,

lour, in my usual familiar way, I was struck with the sight of two very young women who were at work there; the elder of whom was, I thought, the most perfect beauty I had ever seen.—When I met Stamford, I expressed my admiration of the young person I had just parted from, and enquired who she was—he told me she was his niece, and briefly related the history of his sister's family.

At dinner, as Stamford invited me to stay, I could not keep my eyes from the contemplation of Louisa's beauty, which the longer I beheld it, became more and more fascinating; the unaffected innocence and timidity of her manners, rendered her yet more interesting—she knew merely how to read and write: and had, till now, never been out of the village, whither her mother had retired when she was only six or seven years old—and her total unconsciousness of the beauty she so eminently possessed, rivetted the fetters which that beauty, even at the first interview, imposed.

Her

Her uncle was not, however, so blind to the impresson I had received ; yet he managed so well, that, without any appearance of artifice on his part, I was every day at the house ; and, in a week, I was gone an whole age in love. I soon made proposals, which were accepted with transport. I married the beautiful Louisa—and was for some time happy.

Mr. Stamford had immediately the whole management of my fortune, in the improvement of which, he had now so much interest ; and in his hands it recovered itself so fast, that, though I made a very good figure in the country, I did not expend more than half my income.—The money thus saved, Stamford put out to the best advantage—and I saw myself likely to regain the lost consequence I so much regretted : a foolish vanity, to which I sacrificed my real felicity.

Stamford, who had all the latent ambition that attends conscious abilities, as a man of business, had, till now, felt that ambition

bition repressed by the little probability there was of his ever reaching a more elevated situation.—But he saw and irritated the mortified pride which I very ill concealed—and, by degrees, he communicated to me, and taught me to adopt those projects, by which he told me I should not only be relieved from this uneasy sensation, but rise to greater consequence than I had ever possessed.—“ You have talents, said he, and ought to exert them.—In these times, any thing may be done by a man of abilities, who has a seat in Parliament. Take a seat in the House of Commons, and a session or two will open to you prospects greater than those you sacrificed in the early part of your life.”—I took his advice, and the following year, instead of selling, at a general election, the two seats for a borough which belonged to me, I filled one myself, and gave the other to Stamford, who, conscious as he was of possessing those powers, which, in a corrupt government, are always eagerly bought,

bought, had long been solicitous to quit the narrow walk of a country attorney, and mount a stage where those abilities would have scope.

In consequence of this arrangement, I took a large house in town; where Stamford and his family had apartments for the first four or five months.—At the end of that time, he had managed so well, that he hired one for himself.—Artful, active, and indefatigable, with a tongue very plausible, and a conscience very pliant, he soon became a very useful man to the party who had purchased him. Preferments and fortune crowded rapidly upon him, and Stamford, the country attorney, was soon forgotten, in Stamford the confidant of ministers, and the companion of peers.

I was not, however, entirely without acquiring some of the advantages he had taught me to expect—I obtained, by what I now blush to think of, (giving my voice in direct opposition to my opinion and my principles,) a place of six hundred pounds a year;

a year: which, though it did little more than pay the rent of my house in town, was, as Mr. Stamford assured me, the foretaste of superior advantages.—But, long before the close of this session of Parliament, I discovered, that far from being likely to recover the fortune I had dissipated, I was, in fact, a considerable loser in pecuniary matters.—Alas! I was yet endeavouring to shut my eyes against the sad conviction, that I had sustained, a yet heavier and more irreparable loss; domestic happiness, and the affection of my wife.

Dazzled and intoxicated by scenes of which she had till then had no idea, Louisa, on our first coming to town entered, with extreme avidity into the dissipation of London—and I indulged her in it, from the silly pride of shewing to the women among whom I had formerly lived, beauty which eclipsed them all.—They affected to disdain the little rustic, whom they maliciously represented as being taken from
among

among the lowest of the people.—The admiration however with which she was universally received by the men, amply revenged their malignity, but, while it mortified them, it ruined me.

Louisa lived now in a constant succession of flattery, by which perhaps a stronger mind might have become giddy.—She had princes at her toilet and noblemen at her feet every day ; and from them she soon learned to imagine, that had she been seen before she threw herself away on me, there was no rank of life, however exalted, to which such charms might not have given her pretensions.—That love, which till this fatal period she seemed to have for me—that gratitude of which her heart had appeared so full (for I had provided for all her family) even her affection for her children, was drowned in the intoxicating draughts of flattery, which were every day administered to her—and when the time came for our returning into the country, she returned indeed with me, but I carried

carried not back the ingenuous, unaffected, Louisa ; whose simplicity, rather than her beauty, had won my heart.—Ah ! no !—I saw only a fine lady eager for admiration ; willing to purchase it on any terms, and fullen and discontented when she had not those about her from whom she had been so accustomed to receive it.—That happiness was lost to me for ever. I had long been conscious, but I still hoped to preserve my honor—and that I might detach my wife from those by whose assiduity it seemed to be the most endangered, I determined to make a journey into Italy.—She neither promoted or objected to the scheme, but a few days before that, which I had fixed on to begin our journey, she left the house, and put herself under the protection of a man who disgraces the name he bears.

I pursued the usual course in these cases ; I challenged and fought with him—I was slightly, and he was dangerously wounded ; and by way of further satisfaction I heard,
that

that my wife attended him in his illness, and as soon as he was able to travel, accompanied him to the South of France.

I then thought of pursuing that method of vengeance, which had some years before been successfully employed against myself, and had begun the preliminary steps towards it, when Stamford, the now prosperous uncle of my wife, undertook to dissuade me—he represented to me that any money I could obtain, would only be considered as the price of my dishonor—and that such a publication of misconduct in the mother of my children would be very injurious to them, particularly to my little girl—that therefore it would, upon every account, be better to suffer him to negotiate an accommodation with—I stopped him short, without hearing to its close, this infamous and insulting proposal—and desired him to leave my house; no longer doubting, from comparing this with other instances that now occurred to me, that he had sold the person of his niece to her seducer,

seducer, with as much *sang froid* as he had before sold his own conscience to the minister.

Impressed by this opinion, and being too well convinced of the futility of those chimerical plans with which he had lured me from independence and felicity, I determined never more to hold converse with him : and to divest myself, as soon and as completely as possible of all regret, for a worthless and ungrateful woman.—I therefore took all my affairs into my own hands, accepted the chiltern hundreds, and selling my seat for the remainder of the seven years, I resigned at once my place at court, and my place in parliament ; for by the latter I now felt, that I had unworthily obtained the former.—Then, letting the family house where I had resided in the neighbourhood of Stamford, I settled myself at this smaller place ; the only property I possess at distance from my native county.

Here I have now lived nearly eight

years, and between the education of my children, and the amusement afforded me by my farm, I hope I shall end those years at least not so unhappily as they began.—Of the woman once so beloved, I can now think with sorrow and pity rather than resentment, for she is dead—and I wish her errors to be forgotten and forgiven by the world, as I have forgiven, though I cannot forget them.—Though released by her death from any matrimonial engagement, I have no intention again to hazard my happiness, but apply all my time in improving the remains of my estate for my son; to render him worthy to enjoy it—and to educate my daughter in such a manner, that although she promises to possess her mother's beauty, she may not be its victim.—For this purpose it will soon become necessary for me to quit occasionally the solitude where I have regained my peace, and return to those scenes among which I lost it; for I am determined my little Louisa shall see the world before she is settled in it; that

ſhe may learn to enjoy it with moderation, or reſign it with dignity.

In looking forward, my dear friend, to this period, now not very remote, I have thought that a wife of yours would be the perſon to whom I ſhould beſt like to entruſt ſo precious a charge as my charming girl on her firſt entrance into life.—Thus you ſee that I had, in recommending a wife to you, no very juſt claim to the diſintereſtedneſs of which I have ſometimes boaſted—but ſo goes the world. I have tired myſelf, and exhausted my ſpirits, by this detail of what I always avoid recalling, when it can ſerve no purpoſe but to renew fruitleſs regret—May, however, the narrative which has coſt me ſome pain, ſerve to convince you, that ſuch women as the two Fairfaxes, are much leſs likely to ſacrifice their honour on the altar of vanity, than the rural damſel from the Welch mountains or northern fells. I hope to hear from you, as you promiſe, once more before you depart—It is impoſſible to help again offering
my

my congratulation on your fortunate choice of Waverly for a travelling companion—nor can I avoid admiring the effect of *family likenesses*.

Adieu ! your's ever,

E. BETHEL.

L E T T E R V.

T O M R. B E T H E L.

June 25, 1790.

YOU are very good to have taken so much trouble, and to have entered on a detail so painful to yourself for my advantage—be assured, my good friend, I feel all my obligations to you on this, and on innumerable occasions; and that I should pay to your opinion the utmost deference were not my marrying now, perhaps my ever marrying at all, quite out of the question—for I believe I shall never have an heart to bestow, and without it I can never solicit that love, which, so circumstanced, I can neither deserve nor repay.

You tell me, Bethel, that I vainly expect to meet the cultivated mind and polished manners of refined society, united with the simple and unpretending modesty of retired life,

life, while the idea I have thus dressed up as a model of perfection, will embitter all my days—It will indeed!—but it is not the search that will occupy, or the *idea* that will persecute me—it is the reality, the living original of this *fair idea*, which I have found—and found in possession of another—yes my friend—Geraldine unites these perfections—and adds to them so many others, both of heart and understanding, that were her person only an ordinary one, I could not have known without adoring her. I will, not however, dwell upon this topic—for it is one on which *you* do not hear me with pleasure, and it is not fit that *I* indulge myself in what I feel while I write about her—though I can only do so while I write to you, for no other person on earth suspects this attachment, nor do I ever breathe her name to any ear but yours.

I force myself from this subject then; though there is not in the world another that really fixes my attention an instant :

not one that has any momentary attraction, unless it be the transactions in France.—I am waiting here for Waverly, who is gone to Bath, to take leave of his mother: a measure which, on her writing to him to desire it, he adopted with only two debates—whether he should go round by London, to bid adieu to his dear Nancy, a nymph who lives at his expence; or proceed directly to Bath.—As I forefaw that his dear Nancy might chuse to visit the Continent too; or might apprehend his escape from her chains, and therefore prevent his going himself, I most strongly enforced the necessity of his obeying his mother's summons in the quickest way possible; declaring to him, that, if he detained me above a week, I must absolutely go without him—This, as he is now very eager for the journey, and speaks no French, so that he would be subject to many difficulties in travelling alone, at length determined him to go straight to Bath and return immediately; on which conditions

conditions I agreed to wait a week where I am, though, since I must go, I am extremely impatient to be at Paris—and would have made this sacrifice of time to nothing but the service of Geraldine in serving her brother.

Since I wrote to you last, I have passed part of several days with Mr. Fairfax's family, without seeing cause to change my opinion of any part of it.—But all my observations tend rather to confirm that which I formed on my first introduction.—The foolish vanity, whence originates so many stratagems to heighten their consequence, that affectation which carries them into the superior ranks of life, to applaud and flatter there, that they may acquire, in their turn, greater superiority over that class where fortune has placed them, and be looked up to as the standards of elegance and fashion, because they live so much with the nobility, and the sacrifices they are ever ready to make of their own dignity, in order to obtain this : such conduct, I

say, has something in it so weak and so mean, that no accomplishments, beauty or fortune could tempt me to connect myself with a woman who had been educated in such a course of unworthy prejudice.— Surely, my friend, if you have ever remarked this *mal de famille*, you, who have not much reason to venerate the influence of aristocracy in society, would not have supposed that either of these ladies, even if they would deign to accept my fortune in apology for my being only Mr. Desmond, (with hardly a remote alliance to nobility) could have given me in marriage that felicity, which I am sure you wish I may find.—You have probably, therefore, suffered this trait of character, though it strongly pervades the whole family to escape you.

Yesterday morning Miss Fairfax was so obliging as to invite me to be of a party she had made to ride out : or rather allowed me to attend her, together with Waverly and another gentleman, who neither of
them

them came—I however waited on her by her own appointment at the hour of breakfast, and found her sitting at the tea-table with her mother, her sister, and the Lord Newminster; who, notwithstanding his complaints of the dulness of the place, had returned hither after having settled his wager.—He was stretched upon a sofa—with boots on—a terrier lay on one side of him, and he occasionally embraced a large hound, which licked his face and hands, while he thus addressed it.—“ Oh! thou dear bitchy—thou beautiful bitchy—damme, if I don’t love thee better than my mother or my sisters.”—Then, by a happy transition, addressing himself to the youngest Miss Fairfax, he added, “ Statia, my dear, tell me if this is not a divinity of a dog—do you know that I would not part with her for a thousand guineas.” “ Here Tom,” speaking to the servant who waited, “ give me that chocolate and that bread and butter”—the man obeyed, and the noble gentleman poured the chocolate over the plate,

and gave it altogether to the divinity of a dog—"was it hungry?" cried he—"was it hungry, a lovely dear?—I would rather all the old women in the country should fast for a month, than thou shouldest not have thy belly-full."—The ladies, far from appearing to think this speech unfeeling or ridiculous, were lavish in their praises of the animal; and Miss Fairfax, who seems more desirous than her sister to attract the attention of its worthy owner, said, "my Lord, do you think she has had enough?—shall I give her some more chocolate?—or send for a plate of cold meat?" She then caressed the favourite, and fed it from her fair hands; while I, who had been a silent and unnoticed spectator since my first entrance, contemplated with more pity than wonder, this sapient member of our legislature: who having, at length, satisfied the importunity of one of the objects of his solitude, turned to the other, and hugging it with more affection than he would probably have shewed to the heir of his titles,
he

he cried, “my poor dear Venom when will you pup?—Peggy!—will you have one of her puppies?—they are the very best breed in England.—Damme now, do you know, my cursed fellow of a groom lost me the brother to this here bitch a week or two ago—and be cursed to his stupid foul—and now I have got none but Venom left of that there breed.” At this period his lamentation was suddenly suspended by the doors being opened; and the entrance of a figure who gave me the idea of a garden roller set on its end, and supported by two legs: I found it, however, on a second view, a person I had often seen; and immediately recognized to be General Wallingford; who, as soon as he could recover his breath, which seemed to have been lost for a moment by exertion and agitation, thus began:

“So Madam!—so!—this is astonishing—this last news from France.—This decree fills up the measure of that madness and folly which has always marked the con-

duct of that beggerly set who call themselves the National Assembly!—The evil is however now so great, that it must, it must absolutely cure itself; this decree is decisive—they have crushed themselves.”—Mrs. Fairfax now enquired what it was? “Why—I have letters, Madam,” replied the General, “from my friend Langdale, who was passing through Paris on his way to Italy, (for as to making any stay there now, it is impossible for a man of fashion so far to commit himself as to stay in such a scene of vulgar triumph and popular anarchy) Langdale, saw too much of it in three days; and his last letter states, that by a decree passed the nineteenth of June, these low wretches, this collection of dirty fellows, have abolished all titles, and abolished the very name of nobility.”—“The devil they have?” cried Lord Newminster, raising himself upon his elbow, and interrupting a tune he had been humming, a *melza voce*; “the devil they have?—then I wish the King and the Lords may smash

them all—and be cursed to them—I wish they may all be sent to hell—now damme—do you know if I was King of France for three days, I would drive them all to the devil in a jiffy.”

The more sagacious General cast a rueful look at the wife and gallant projector of an impossible exploit: and then, without attempting to demonstrate its impracticability, he began very gravely to descant on the shocking consequences of this decree. Sentiments in which Mrs. Fairfax very heartily joined.—“ It will be impossible, I fear,” said the General, “ at least, for some time, for any man of fashion to reside pleasantly at Paris, which I am extremely sorry for, for it is a place I always used to love very much; and I had great inclination to pass the autumn there.—For my part, I’ve never observed, but that the people had liberty enough—Quite as much, I am convinced, as those wrong-headed, ignorant wretches, that form the canaille ought to have, in an
country;

country ; 'tis a very terrible thing when that corrupt mass gets the upper hand, in any country ; but, in the present instance, the misery is, that certain persons among even *les gens comme il faut*, should be absurd and senseless enough to encourage the brutes, by affecting a ridiculous patriotism, and calling themselves the friends of the people."

" Rot the people,"—cried the noble Peer: " I wish they were all hanged out of the way, both in France and here too.—What business have a set of blackguards to have an opinion about liberty, and be cursed to them? Now General I'll tell you what, if I was a French nobleman now, and had to do with them, damme if I did not shew the impudent rascals the difference.—By Jove, Sir, I'd set fire to their assembly, and mind no more shooting them all, than if they were so many mad dogs."

Though it was used on behalf of his own system of politics, the extreme ignorance

norance and absurdity which this language betrayed, made the General decline answering or approving it; but he was infinitely attentive to the more pathetic lamentations of Mrs. Fairfax, which were thus expressed.—“ Well! I really think, my dear General, that in my whole life, I never *was* so shocked at any thing, as at what you tell me: Heavens! how my sympathising heart bleeds, when I reflect on the numbers of amiable people of rank, compelled thus to the cruel necessity of resigning those ancient and honorable names which distinguished them from the vulgar herd! and who are no longer marked by their titles from that canaille with which it is so odious to be levelled.— They might, in my mind, as well have robbed them of their property, and have turned them out to perish in the streets, if indeed that is not done already.”

“ No;” replied the General, “ that has not happened yet, but doubtless it will; and, indeed, they might as well have
done

done it at once, for they have made Paris so insupportable to people of fashion, that it must, of course, become a mere desert. —Nobody of any elegance of manners can exist, where tradesmen, attornies, and mechanics have the *pas*.—The splendour of that beautiful capital is gone: the glory of the *noblesse* is vanished for ever.”

“Come, come, my dear General,” answered the lady, “let us hope not; a counter-revolution may set all to rights again, and we may live to see these vulgar people punished for their ridiculous ambition, as they deserve. My heart, however, bleeds *to a degree* for the *noblesse*, particularly for two most intimate friends of mine, women of the highest rank, who are, without doubt, included in this universal *bouleversement*.—It was only this last winter, when one of them, la Duchesse de Miremont, who was then in England, you know, said to me—Ah! *ma très chere & très amiable madame Fairfax, je vous en reponds que—*

The

The Lady had, in an instant, forgotten the calamities of her foreign friends in her eagerness to display her own consequence ; but I found it impossible to attend, with patience, to the rest of the dialogue between her and the General, and was meditating how, with the least appearance of rudeness, I could make my escape, when Miss Fairfax's horses were brought to the door, and my servant immediately afterwards arrived with mine.—She rose to go ; and, turning towards Lord Newminster said, with extreme softness—“ Does not your Lordship ride this morning ?” “ No, my dear Pegg,” answered he, yawning in her face as he spoke ; “ I cannot undertake the fatigue, for I was up at eight o'clock to see a set too between the Ruffian and Big Ben, who are to fight next week for a thousand.—I sparred a little myself, and now I'm damned tired, and fit for nothing but a lounge ; perhaps I may meet you in my phaeton an hour hence or so, that's just as the whim takes me.”—The Lady then,

then, in the same gentle tone cried—"Oh creature! equally idle and ferocious!"—while he folded his arms, and re-settling himself, with his two dogs upon the sofa, declared, that he felt himself disposed to take a nap.

The old General, more gallant and more active, notwithstanding his gout and his size, now led Miss Fairfax to her horse; and, as he assisted her to mount it, he seemed to whisper some very tender sentence in her ear; if I could guess by the peculiar expression of his features, while I had nothing to do but to wait while all this passed, and when the ceremony was finished, to ride silently away by her side.—We had hardly, however, quitted the town, when the young Lady thus began.—"This is really very frightful news, Mr Desmond, that General Wallingford has brought us to day.—Do you not think it extremely shocking?" "No, Madam, not at all; I own myself by no means master of the subject, but from all I *do know*,

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feel myself much more disposed to rejoice at, than to lament it."

"Impossible, Mr. Desmond!—Surely I misunderstand you!—What! are you disposed to rejoice that nobility and fashion are quite destroyed?"

"I am glad that oppression is destroyed; that the power of injuring the many is taken from the few.—Dear Madam, are you aware of the evils which in consequence of the feudal system existed in France? A system formed in the blindest periods of ignorance and prejudice; which gave to the *noblesse*, not only an exemption from those taxes which crushed the people by their weight, but gave to the possessors of *les terres titrés*, every power to impoverish and depress the peasant and the farmer; on whom, after all, the prosperity of a nation depends.—That these powers are annihilated, no generous mind can surely lament."

"I hope," replied Miss Fairfax, with more asperity than I thought my humility deserved

deserved—" I hope, Sir, I am not ungenerous, nor quite ignorant, neither, the history of France. But I really must own, that I cannot see the matter in the light you do.—Indeed, I can see nothing but the most horrid cruelty and injustice."

" In calling a man by one name, rather than by another!—My dear Miss Fairfax, the cruelty and injustice must surely be imaginary."—" Not at all, in *my* opinion, Sir," retorted my fair antagonist.—" Title is as much a person's property as his estate; and, in my mind, one might as well be taken away as another—And to lose one's very birth-right, by a mob too, of vulgar creatures.—Good Heaven! I declare the very idea is excessively terrifying; I only suppose the English mob were to get such a notion, and in some odious riot begin the same sort of thing here!"

" Perhaps," replied I (still, I assure you, speaking with the utmost humility), " perhaps there never may exist here the same *cause*; and, therefore, the *effect* v

not follow.—Our nobility are less numerous; and, till within a few years, that titles have become so very common, they were all of that description which could be ranked only with the *haut noblesse* of France; they are armed with no powers to oppress, individually, the inferior order of men; they have no vassals *but those whose service is voluntary*; and, upon the whole, are so different a body of men from that which was once the nobility of France, as to admit no very just comparison, and no great probability of the same steps ever being taken, to annihilate their titles; though they possess, in their right of hereditary legislation, a strong, and to many, an obnoxious feature which the higher ranks in France never possessed.—However, we will, if you please, and merely for the sake of conversation, suppose that the *people*, or, if you please, the *vulgar*, took it into their heads to level all those distinctions that depend upon names—I own I see nothing in it so very dreadful, it might be endured.”

“ Yes,

“ Yes, by savages and brutes, perhaps,” replied the Lady, with anger flashing from her eyes, and lending new eloquence to her tongue, “ but I must say, that I never expected to hear from a man of fashion, a defence of an act so shamefully tyrannous and unjust, exercised over their betters by the scum of the people; an act that must destroy all the elegance of manners, all the high polish that used to render people, in a certain style, so delightful in France. By degrees, I suppose, those who can endure to stay in a country under such a detestable sort of government, will become as rude and disgusting as our common country 'Squires.”

I saw by the look with which this speech was delivered, that *I* was decidedly a common country 'Squire.—“ Unhappily,” replied I, “ my dear Miss Fairfax, the race of men whom you call common country 'Squires, are almost, if not entirely annihilated in England; though no *decree* has passed against them—A total change of

manners has effected this." I was going on, but with great vivacity she interrupted me.—

" So much the better, Sir, they will never be regretted."—

" Perhaps not, Madam, and as we are merely arguing for the sake of conversation, let me just suppose that the same thing might happen, if all those who are now raised above us by their names, were to have no other distinction than their merits.—Let me ask you, would the really great, the truly noble among them (and that there are many such nobody is more ready to allow) be less beloved and revered if they were known only by their family names? On the other hand, would the celebrity of the men of *ton* be much reduced? For example, the nobleman I had the honour of meeting at your house to-day.—He is now, I think, called Lord Newminster. Would he be less agreeable in his manners, less refined in his conversation, less learned, less worthy, less respectable,

pectable, were he unhappily compelled to be called, as his father was before he bought his title, Mr. Grantham ?”

I know not whether it was the matter or the manner that offended my beautiful aristocrate, but she took this speech most cruelly amiss, and most inhumanely determining to avenge herself upon me ; she replied, with symptoms of great indignation in her countenance, “ That she was truly sorry to see the race of mere country Squires *did* still exist, and *that*, among those where, from fortune and pretensions, she should least have imagined they would be found. (This was me.) That as to Lord Newminster, by whatever name he might at any time be called, she should, for her part, always say and think, that there were few who so compleatly filled the part of a man of real fashion among the nobility ; and not one, in any rank of life, who, in her mind, possessed a twentieth part of his good qualities.

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The manner in which this was uttered, was undoubtedly meant to crush at once, and for ever, all the aspiring thoughts, that I, presuming on the strength of my fortune, might per-adventure have dared to entertain.—Overwhelmed by the pretty indignation, as much as by the unanswerable arguments of my angry goddess, I began to consider how I might turn or drop discourse where I was so likely to suffer for my temerity, when I was relieved by the appearance of a carriage, at a distance, which, she said, she knew to be Lord Newminster's phaeton; and, without any further ceremony than slightly wishing me good-morrow, she cantered away to meet it—leaving me, as slowly I trotted another way, to congratulate my country on the pure notions of patriotic virtue with which even its women are impressed; and, on such able supporters of its freedom, as Lord Newminster in the upper, and General Wallingford in the lower House.—Alas! my opposite principles, however modestly

and diffidently urged, have lost me, as I have since found, for ever, that favour, which without being a man of fashion, I was once so happy as to enjoy from your fair relations : for whenever, in the course of the next two or three days, I happened to meet them, I was so slightly noticed, that I apprehend our acquaintance will end here.—Condole with me, dear Bethel; and, to make some amends, let me soon hear from you.

I have had, very unexpectedly, a letter from Mr. Digby, my mother's sole surviving brother ; who, absorbed in his own singular notions and amusements, has hardly seemed to recollect me for many years.—He has heard, I know not how (for I have long had no other communication with him, than writing him an annual letter, with an annual present of game and venison, since I became of age) that I am going to France; and he strongly remonstrates upon the danger I shall incur if I do, both to my person and my principles.—He entreats
me

me not to try such a hazardous journey ; and hints, that his fortune is too large to be despised.—I don't know what this sudden fit of solicitude means, for though I am the only relation he has, I never had any reason to think I should benefit by his fortune ; and your care, my dear Bethel, has precluded the necessity of my desiring it. I shall answer him with great civility, however, but certainly make no alteration in my plan.

Adieu ! my friend—fail not to write if you hear any thing of the family of Verney.

Your's ever,

LIONEL DESMOND.

L E T T E R VI.

TO MR. BETHEL.

Calais, July 4, 1790.

I HAD waited for Waverly the week I had promised to wait—the last day of that week was come; and I was going to enquire for a passage to Calais or Dunkirk, when I met Anthony, his servant, in the street. The poor fellow was covered with dust, and seemed half dead with fatigue; “well Anthony where is your master?” “Oh! lord sir,” answered he, “my master has changed his mind about going to France, and sent me post from Stamford in Lincolnshire, Sir, where he is gone with some other gentlemen to an house, one Sir James Deybourne has just by there; —Sir, I have hardly been off the saddle for above fix-and-thirty hours; and we had no sooner got down there, than master sent
me

me off post to your honor ; to let you know, Sir, that he could not, no how in the world, go to Paris with you at this time.”—

“ But did he not write ; ” “ why, no Sir, he was going to write I believe, but somehow his friends they persuaded him there was no need of it ; so, Sir, he called me, and bid me, that I should deliver the message to you, about his not coming, the soonest I possibly could : and so, Sir, I set off directly, and he told me to say that he should write in a very little time ; and he hoped he said, that I would make haste, to prevent your honor’s waiting for him.”

I had at this moment occasion to recollect, how nearly Waverly was related to Geraldine ; to prevent my feeling some degree of anger and resentment towards him.—I sent, however, his poor harassed servant to my lodgings, where I ordered him to refresh himself by eating and sleeping ; and then went to see about my passage to France.

I afterwards fauntered into one of the libraries, and took up a book ; but my attention was soon diverted, by a very plump, sleek, short, and, altogether, a most orthodox figure ; whose enormous white wig, deeply contrasted by his peony-coloured face, and consequential air, declared him to be a dignitary, very high, at least, in his own esteem.—On his entrance he was very respectfully saluted by a little thin man in black ; whose snug well-powdered curls, humble demeanor, and cringing address, made me suppose him either a dependent on the plump doctor, or one who thought he might benefit by his influence—for he not only resigned the newspaper he was reading, but bustled about to procure others ;—while his superior, noticing him but little, settled himself in his seat, with a magisterial air—put on his spectacles, and took out his snuff-box ; and having made these arrangements, he began to look over the paper of the day ;

day ; but seeing it full of intelligence from France, he laid it down, and,

“ As who should say I am Sir Oracle,”

he began an harangue, speaking slowly and through his nose.

“ ’Tis an uneasy thing,” said he, “ a very uneasy thing, for a man of probity and principles to look in these days into a newspaper.—Greatly must every such man be troubled to read of the proceedings that are going forward in France.—Proceedings, which must awaken the wrath of heaven ; and bring down upon that perfidious and irreverent people its utmost indignation.”

The little man took the opportunity the solemn close of this pompous oration gave him, to cry—“ very true, Doctor, your observation is perfectly just ; things to be sure have just now a very threatening appearance.” “ Sir,” resumed the grave personage, “ it is no *appearance*, but a very shocking reality. They have done the

most unjust and wicked of all actions in depriving the church of its revenues.—'Twere as reasonable, Sir, for them to take my birth-right or your's."

" I thought, Doctor," said a plain looking man, who had attended very earnestly to the beginning of this dialogue—" I thought, that the revenues and lands of the church, being the property of the state, they might be directed by it into any channel more conducive, in the opinion of that state, to its general good; and that it appearing to the National Assembly of France, that this their property was unequally divided; and that their bishops lived like princes, while their curates* had hardly the means of living like men.—I imagined—"

" You imagined, Sir?—And give me leave to ask what right you have to imagine?—or what you know of the subject!—The church lands and revenues the property of the state!—No, Sir—I affirm that they are not—That they are the property

* Curées-rectors;

of the possessors, as much, Sir, as your land and houses, if you happen to have any, are your's."

"Not quite so, surely, my good Doctor," replied the gentleman mildly—"My houses and lands—if, as you observe, I happen to have any, were probably either acquired by my own industry, or were my birth-right.—Now Sir"—He would have proceeded, but the Divine, in an angry and supercilious manner interrupted him—"Sir, I wont argue, I wont commit myself, nor endeavour to convince a person whose principles are, I see, fundamentally wrong.—But no man of sense will deny, that when the present body of French clergy took upon them their holy functions—that then they became, as it were, born again—and—and—and by their vows—"

"But, my worthy Sir, those vows were vows of poverty.—They were vows, by which, far from acquiring temporal goods; the means of worldly indulgencies, they

expressly renounced all terrestrial delights, and gave themselves to a life of mortification and humility.—Now, it is very certain, that many of them not only possessed immense revenues, wrung from the hard hands of the peasant and the artificer, but actually expended those revenues.—Not in relieving the indigent, or encouraging the industrious; but in gratifications more worthy the dissolute followers of the meretricious scarlet-clad lady of Babylon, than the mortified disciples of a simple and pure religion.” Then, as if disdaining to carry farther an argument in which he had so evidently the advantage against the proud petulance of his adversary, the gentleman walked calmly away, while the Doctor, swelling with rage, cried, “I don’t know who that person is, but he is very ignorant and very ill-bred.”—“’Tis but little worth your while, Doctor,” cried the acquiescent young man, “to enter into controversial discourse with persons so unworthy of the knowledge and literature which you ever throw into your conversation.”

“ It is not, Sir,” answered the Doctor ;
“ it were indeed a woeful waste of the talent with which it has pleased heaven to entrust me, to contend with the atheistical pretenders to philosophy, that obtrude themselves but too much into society.— However, Sir, a little time will shew that I am right, in asserting, that a nation that pays no more regard to the sacred order, can never prosper :—but, that such horrible sacrilegious robbery, as that wretched anarchy, for I cannot call it government, has been guilty of, will draw down calamities upon the miserable people ; and that the evil spirit, which is let loose among them, will prompt them to deluge their country with blood, by destroying each other.”

“ So much the better, Doctor,” cried a fat, bloated figure, in a brown riding wig, a red waistcoat, and boots—“ so much the better—I heartily, for my part, wish they may.” This philanthropic personage, who had till now been talking with an old lady

about the price of foals and mackarel that morning at market, now quitted his feat; and squatting himself down near the two reverend gentlemen, proceeded briskly in his discourse, as if perfectly conscious of its weight and energy.—“ Yes Doctor, I vote for their cutting one anothers throats, and so saving us the trouble—The sooner they set about it, the better I shall be pleased, for, as for my part, I detest a Frenchman, and always did.—You must know, that last summer, I went down to Brighton, for I always go every summer to some of these kind of watering places.—So, as I was observing, I went down to Brighton in the month of August, which is the best part of the season, because of the wheat-ears being plenty; but, I dont know how it happened, I had an ugly feel in my stomach; what was the meaning of it I could not tell: but, I quite lost my relish for my dinner, and so I thought it proper to consult a phyfician or two on the case; and they advised me to try if a little bit of
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a fail would not fet things to rights ; and told me, that very likely, if I went over the water, I fhould find my appetite.—So, Sir, I determined to go, for riding did me no good at all ; and fo of courfe I was a little uneasy.—So, Sir, I even went over the herring pond.—I was as fick as a horfe, to be fure, all night ; but however, the next morning, when we landed on French ground, there was I tolerably chirruping, and pretty well difpofed for my breakfast.—Oh, ho ! thinks I, this will answer, I believe.—However, I thought I would lay by for dinner, for the Monfieur at the inn told us he could let us have game and fifh.—But lord, Sir, moft of their provifions are nothing to be compared to ours ; and what is good they ruin by their vile manner of dreffing it.—Why, Sir, we had for dinner fome foals—the fineft I ever faw, but they were fried in bad lard ; and then, Sir, for the partridges, there was neither game gravy, nor poiverade, nor even bread fauce.—Faith, I had enough of them and
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their cookery in one day ; so, Sir, the next morning I embarked again for old England. However, upon the whole, the thing itself answered well enough, for my appetite was almost at a par, as I may say, when I came home. But for your French, I never desire to set eyes on any of them again—and indeed, for my part, I am free to say, that if the whole race was extirpated, and we were in possession of their country, as in justice it is certain we ought to be, why, it would be so much the better—We should make a better hand of it in such a country as that a great deal.—I understand, that one of the things these fellows have done since they have got the notion of liberty into their heads, has been, to let loose all the taylor and tinkers and friseurs in their country, to destroy as much game as they please. Now, Sir, what a pity it is, that a country where there is so much, is not ours, and our game-laws in force there.—And then their wine ; I can't say I ever saw a vineyard, because,

because, as I observed, I did not go far enough up the country : but, no doubt, we should manage that matter much better ; and, upon the whole, considering we always were their masters, my opinion is, that it would be right and proper for our ministry to take this opportunity of falling upon them, while they are weakening each other ; and, if they will have liberty, give them a little taste of the liberty of us Englishmen ; for, of themselves, they can have no right notion of what it is—and, take my word for it, its the meereft folly in the world for them to think about it.—No, no ; none but Englishmen, free-born Britons, either understand it or deserve it.”

Such was the volubility and vehemence with which this speech was made, that the Doctor could not find any opportunity to interrupt it.—Whatever were his opinion of the politics of the orator, he seemed heartily to coincide with him in the notions he entertained on the important science of eating. He therefore (though with an
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air of restraint, and as if he would cautiously guard his dignity from the too great familiarity with which the other seemed to approach him) entered into another dissertation on the French revolution, anathematizing all its projectors and upholders; with a zeal which Ernulphus might envy; and, in scarce less charitable terms, branding them with the imputation of every hideous vice he could collect, and ending a very long oration with a pious and christian denunciation of battle and murder, pestilence and famine here, and eternal torments hereafter, for all who imagined, aided, or commended such an abomination.

The gentleman who had visited France for the restoration of his appetite (and who had formerly, as I learned afterwards, kept a tavern in London, and was now retired upon a fortune) seemed unable or unwilling to distinguish declamation from argument, or prejudice from reason—He appeared to be delighted by the furious eloquence of the churchman, whom he
shook

shook heartily by the hand.—“ Doctor,” cried he, “ I am always rejoiced to meet with gentlemen of your talents and capacity; you are an honour to our establishment; what you have said is quite convincing indeed; strong, unanswerable argument: I heartily wish some of my acquaintance, who pretend to be advocates for French liberty, were to hear you—I believe they’d soon be put to a non-plus—You’d be quite too much for them, I’m sure. Pray, Doctor, give me leave to ask, what stay do you mean to make in this place? I shall be proud to cultivate the honour of your acquaintance; if you are here next week, will you do me the favour to dine with me on Wednesday—I’ve a chicken-turtle, which promises well—the first I’ve received this season, from what I call my West-Indian farm; a little patch of property I purchased, a few years since, in Jamaica.—As to the dressing of turtles, I always see to that myself, for I am extremely particular; though, I must say,
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my negro fellow is a very excellent hand at it—I have lent him more than once to perform for some great people at t’other end of the town.—If you’ll do me the pleasure, Doctor, to take a dinner with me I shall be glad; and, indeed, besides the favour of your company, I would fain have the four or five friends that I’ve invited for that day, to hear a little of your opinion upon these said French matters.”

Though the Doctor had, till now, hesitated and seemed to doubt whether he did not descend too much from his elevated superiority, in encouraging the forwardness of his new acquaintance; this proposal, flattering at once his pride and his appetite, was irresistible.—He, therefore, relaxing from the air of arrogant dignity he usually wore, accepted very graciously of the invitation to assist in devouring the chicken-turtle, and then these two worthy companions of British faith and British liberty, entered into conversation on matters, which, seem as it should, were neither last nor least
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in their esteem. This was an enquiry into the good things for the table, that were to be found in the neighbourhood; in praise of many of which, they were extremely eloquent.—The Doctor complained of the scarcity of venison, but added, that he expected an excellent haunch in a few days, from a nobleman, his friend and patron; of which, Mr. Sidebottom (for such was the name of this newly acquired friend) was requested to partake.—This request was, of course, readily assented to, and they, at length, left the shop together, having settled to ride to a neighbouring farm-house, where Mr. Sidebottom assured the Doctor, that he had discovered some delicate fat ducks and pigeons, of peculiar size and flavour.—“ I even question,” said he, “ whether there will not be, in about a week’s time, some nice turkey powts.—The good woman is very clever about her poultry, and if she has had tolerable luck since I saw her, they must now be nearly fit for the dish.”—In this pleasing hope

hope, the two gentlemen departed together; I followed them at a little distance, and saw them accosted by a thin, pale figure of a woman, with one infant in her arms and another following her; her dress was not that of a beggar, yet it bespoke extreme indigence; I fancied she was a foreigner, and my idea was confirmed when I heard her speak; she stepped slowly, and, as it seemed, irresolutely, towards the two prosperous men, who were going in search of fat ducks and early turkeys; and, in imperfect English, began to relate, that she was a widow, and in great distress. "A widow," cried Mr. Sidebottom, "why you are a Frenchwoman; what have you to do here? and why do you not go back to your own country? This is the time there for beggars—they have got the upper hand. Go, go, mistress; get back to your own country."—The poor woman answered, that she had travelled towards Dover with her two children, in hopes of getting a passage to France; but that they having
been

been ill on the road, her little stock of money was exhausted; "and therefore," said she, "I was advised to come hither, Sir, in hopes of procuring, by the generosity of the company who frequent this place, wherewithal to pay my passage to France; for unless I can produce enough for that purpose, no commander of a vessel will take me."

"And let me tell you, they very properly refuse," said Mr. Sidebottom, "you had no business that I know of in England, but to take the bread out of the mouth of our own people; and now I suppose you are going to join the fish women, and such like, who are pulling down the king's palaces."—The unhappy woman cast a look of anguish on her children, and was quietly relinquishing this hopeless application, when the Doctor, more alive to the tender sollicitations of pity than Mr. Sidebottom, put his hand into his pocket, and then, in a nasal voice and in a magisterial manner, thus spoke: "Woman! though
I have

I have no doubt but that thou art a creature of an abandoned conduct, and that these children are base born ; yet, being a stranger and a foreigner, I have so much universal charity, that, unworthy as I believe thee, I will not shut mine heart against thy petition. If thou art an impostor, and wickedly impostest upon that charity, so much the worse for thee ; I do my duty in bestowing it, and the wrong rests with thee ! Here ! Here is—sixpence ! which I give thee towards thy passage ! Go, therefore, depart in peace ; and let me not have occasion to reprove thee to-morrow for lingering about the streets of this place : where, as people of fortune and consideration come for their health, they ought not to be disturbed and disgusted by the sight of objects of misery. I don't love to see beggars in these places ; their importunity is injurious to the nerves. Let me hear of you no more—Our laws oblige us to provide for no poor but our own."

The Doctor having thus fulfilled two great duties of his profession, those of giving advice, and giving alms, strutted away with the worthy Mr. Sidebottom; who wisely considered that the turnpike through which he must pass in his tour after good dishes, would demand the small money he had about him, he therefore forbore to add to the bounty of the Doctor towards the unfortunate petitioner, who, feeling some degree of alarm from the remonstrance she imperfectly understood, remained for a moment gazing on the six-pence, which she yet held in her hand. She then clasped the youngest of her children to her breast, took the hand of the other as he clung to her gown, and burst into tears. In a moment, however, she dried her eyes, and, leaning against the rails of the parade, she cast a despairing look towards the gay groups who were passing, yet seemed examining to which of them she might apply with most hope of success. At this moment I approached nearer to
her;

her, but she did not see me till I spoke to her in French, and inquired, how I could assist her. The voice of kindness, in her own language, was so soothing, and I fear so new, that she was for some moments unable to answer me; the simplicity of the narrative with which she at length satisfied my inquiry, convinced me of the truth of all she related.

She told me, that her husband, the son of a reputable tradesman at Amiens, had married her, the daughter of a very inferior one, against his father's positive injunctions, who had thereupon dismissed him from the business to which he had been brought up, and left him to the world. That thus destitute, with a wife, and soon afterwards a child to support, he had accepted the offer of an English gentleman to accompany him to England, "where he behaved so well," continued she, "that his master, who was a good man, became much his friend, and hearing he had in France a wife and child,

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whom

whom he loved, he not only gave leave, but money to have us fetched over. Some months after, Sir, the gentleman married a very rich lady from the city, who wished him to part with his French servant; but though he prevailed upon her to let him keep a person who had been very faithful to him, the lady never liked him. In less than a twelvemonth after his marriage, my husband's master was taken ill of a fever and died. My husband sat up with him many nights, and by the time his master was carried to the grave, he fell ill himself of the same distemper; and his lady being afraid of the infection, hurried him out of the house to the lodging where I and my children lived. There he lay dreadfully ill for three weeks, during which time the lady sent a physician to him once or twice, but afterwards went into the country, and thought no more about him; so that we had nothing to support this cruel illness, but what my husband had saved in his service; which,

with a wife and two children to keep out of his wages, to be sure, could not be much. He got through the fever, Sir, but it had so ruined his blood, that he went almost immediately into a decline; and it is now three weeks since he died, leaving me quite destitute with these two children. I applied for help, in this my utmost distress, to the widow of his late master, in whose service he certainly lost his life. After waiting a great while for an answer, she sent a gentleman to me with a guinea, which was, she said, all she should ever do for me; and she advised me to get back to France. This, by the assistance of the gentleman that brought me this money, who touched with pity for my situation, raised for me, among his friends, above a guinea more, I attempted to do; but on the road my children fell sick, and my money was all expended in procuring them assistance: so that now I have no means of reaching France, where, if I could once get there, I hope my pa-

rents,

rents, poor as they are, would receive me, and that I should be able some way or other to earn my bread and my children's."

I hope it is unnecessary to say, that I immediately set the widow's heart at ease on this score ; and undertook to pay for her's and her children's conveyance.

Yesterday evening then I embarked. The wind was against us, and the sea ran extremely high ; but I was impatient to be gone ; and though the master doubted whether he could cross to Dunkirk, I was impatient, and pressed him to get under *weigh*, which he did, notwithstanding the unpromising appearance of the weather.

I sat upon deck, looking towards the shore, when I saw, though we were by this time at a considerable distance from it, a group of people who seemed to be making signals to the men in the vessel. I bade the master observe them, and he distinguished, by his glass, a boat attempting to put off, in which he told me he imagined some

other passengers, who had arrived after we had come on board, might be. He requested, therefore, that I would give him leave to lay to and wait for it, which I readily granted; and as the waves were now extremely high, we continued, with some apprehensions, to watch the boat, which was a very small one, and which often entirely disappeared.

At length, by the great exertion of the fishermen who were in it, the boat came along side, and one of the men hailing the master, told him he had brought a gentleman and his two servants, who were but just arrived from London in great haste, for a passage to France.

Three rueful figures did indeed appear in the boat; and in the first of them that was helped up the side of the vessel, I recognised Waverly!

Sick to death, wet to the skin, and, I believe, not a little frightened by the tossing of the boat, he could not immediately answer the questions I put to him. At
length

length he told me, that the day after he had sent off Anthony he altered his mind, and set out post to overtake me before I sailed. "But now, said he, I wish somehow I had not come till next week; for setting off in such a hurry, I have not brought my horses and carriages as I intended; and have only that portmanteau of cloaths with me." I was almost tempted to tell him he had then better return on shore, and wait for the accommodation he thus regretted; but I thought of Geraldine, and detesting myself for my petulance, began to condole with, instead of blaming the half-drowned Waverly, whom I immediately advised to change his cloaths and go to bed, for he suffered extremely from the motion of the vessel, and again wished himself on shore. On the shore, however, to which, in less turbulent weather, a little encouragement might have sent him, he had now no inclination to venture, but took my advice and retired to the cabin; from whence Anthony came up in a few

moments with a letter in his hand, which he said his master had forgot to give me. I looked at the direction—it was the writing, the elegant writing, of Geraldine. I opened it with trembling hands, and a palpitating heart. Heavens ! does she write to me ? Dare I hope she remembers me ?—I have employed every moment since in reading and in copying it, that you may see how elegantly she writes, though I cannot part with the original. With what delight I retrace every word she has written ; with what transport kiss the spaces between the lines, where her fingers have passed. But you have no notion of all this, and will smile contemptuously at it, as boyish and romantic folly. —My dear Bethel, why should we call folly that which bestows such happiness, since, after all our wisdom, our felicity depends merely on the imagination ? I feel lighter and gayer since I have been in possession of this dear letter, the first I ever received from her ! Waverly's little foibles disappear

disappear before its powerful influence. It acts like a talisman, and hides his faults, half of which I am ready to think virtues, since without his indecision I should never have received it. Oh ! with what zeal will I endeavour to execute the charge my angelic friend gives me to watch over the conduct of her brother. He is really not a bad young man ; and I particularly rejoice at his being here, as I have learned from him, this morning, that the people with whom he went from Bath into Lincolnshire are gamblers, who have won a considerable sum of money of him. From such adventures, I hope to save him in future ; and admitting it possible that his unsettled temper may sometimes occasion me some trouble, I shall remember that he is the brother of my adorable Geraldine, and the task will become a pleasure.— Farewell, my friend, you know my address at Paris. I shall go on this evening to Amiens, where I shall, perhaps, be de-

tained a day by the affairs of my poor *protégée* and her children, who must be put into some way of subsistence before I leave them.

I am, ever, my dear Bethel,

Faithfully your's,

LIONEL DESMOND.

L E T-

L E T T E R VII.

Paris, July 19, 1790.

I HAVE now, my dear Bethel, been some days in this capital, without having had time to write to you; so deeply has the animating spectacle of the 14th, and the conversation in which I have been since engaged, occupied my attention.—I can now, however, assure you—and with the most heart-felt satisfaction, that nothing is more unlike the real state of this country, than the accounts which have been given of it in England: and that the sanguinary and ferocious democracy, the scenes of anarchy and confusion, which we have had so pathetically described and lamented, have no existence but in the malignant fabrications of those who have been paid for their misrepresentations.

That it has been an object with our government to employ such men; men, whose business it is to stifle truths, which though unable to deny, they are unwilling to admit; is a proof, that they believe the delusion of the people necessary to their own views; and have recourse to these miserable expedients, to impede a little the progress of that light which they see rising upon the world. You know I was always interested in this revolution; (you sometimes thought too warmly) and I own, that till I came hither, I was not sufficiently master of the subject, to be able to answer those doubts which you often raised, as to the permanency of the new system in France—But I think, that candid and liberal as you are; and with such principles of universal philanthropy as you possess, I shall now have no difficulty in making you as warmly anxious, as I am, for the success of a cause which, in its consequence, involves the freedom, and, of course, the happiness, not merely of this great people,

ple, but of the universe. I had letters of introduction to several gentlemen here; among others, to the *ci-devant* Marquis de Montfleuri—A man, in whom the fire of that ardent imagination, so common among his countrymen, is tempered by sound reason; and a habit of reflection, very unusual at his time of life, to a native of any country, but particularly to one of this, where corruption has long been a system, from the influence of which, it was hardly possible for young men of property and title to escape.—Montfleuri, however, though born a courtier, is one of the steadiest friends to the people—and it is from him that I have heard a detail of the progress of this great event, on which, I believe, you may depend; and I will, in my two or three next letters, relate it in his own words.

In the mean-time, my friend, I have infinite pleasure in describing to you the real state of Paris, and its neighbourhood—Where there is not only an excellent po-

lice, but where the natural gaiety of the people now appears without any restraint, and yet, certainly, without any disorder.—Where the utmost care is taken of the lives of the commonality, of whom a great number perished yearly in Paris, by the furious manner in which the carriages of the *nobleſſe* were driven through the ſtreets, where there are no accommodations for the foot paſſenger—and where the proud and unfeeling poſſeſſors of thoſe ſplendid equipages (the diſappearance of which has been ſo much lamented in England) have been known to feel their rapid wheels cruſhing a fellow creature, with emotions ſo far from thoſe of humanity, as to have ſaid, “*tant mieux, il y a toujours aſſez de ces gueux**.” Is it not
natural

* “So much the better, there are always enough of thoſe ſlabby rascals.”

I know not whether, in the numerous anecdotes of this kind, that have been collected, it has ever been related, that a very few years ſince, a young
Frenchman

natural for a people, who have been thus treated, to retaliate with even more ferocity than has been imputed to them?—and can it appear surprizing, that when the remark has been made, that there are now fewer magnificent carriages in the streets of Paris than there were formerly, they have answered, “*mais il y a encore trop.**”

One of the greatest complaints which the discontented here have made—One, on which the eloquent declaimers among us have the most loudly insisted, is the levelling principle which the revolutionists

Frenchman of fashion—one of “the very first world,” was driving through the streets of Paris, with an Englishman, his acquaintance, in a *cabriolet*, in the *rue St. Honoré*, which is always extremely crowded, his horse threw down a poor man, and the wheels going over his neck, killed him on the spot.—The Englishman, with all the emotions of terror, natural on such an incident, cried out—Good God, you have killed the man!—The *charioteer* drove on; saying, with all possible *sang froid*—“*Eh bien, tant pis pour lui*”—Well then, so much the worse for him.

* “But there are still too many.”

have

have pursued.—Certainly, it is a great misfortune to the nobility to be deprived of the invaluable privilege of believing themselves of a superior species, and to be compelled to learn that they are men.

I was assured, in London, that I should find Paris a desert—How true such an assertion is, let the public walks, and public spectacles witness; places, where such numbers assemble, as are hardly ever seen collected in London, (unless on very extraordinary occasions;) yet, where even in the present hour, when the ferment of the public mind cannot have subsided, there is no disorder, no tumult, nor even that degree of disturbance, which the most trifling popular whim excites among us.

It is, however, at these places, the people are to be seen, and not their oppressors.—And if it is only these latter that constitute an inhabited country, Paris will remain, perhaps, deserted, in the eyes of those who are described by General Wallingford and Mrs. Fairfax—as “people of fashion”

fashion"—*les gens comme il faut*—While the philosopher, the philanthropist, the citizen of the *world*; whose comprehensive mind takes a more sublime view of human nature than he can obtain from the *heights* of Versailles or St. James's, rejoices at the spectacle which every where presents itself of newly-diffused happiness, and hails his fellow man, disencumbered of those paltry distinctions that debased and disguised him.

Such a man—with heart-felt satisfaction repeats that energetic, and in regard to this country, *prophetic* sentence of our immortal poet.

“Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation, rousing herself like the strong man after sleep; and shaking her invincible locks:—Methinks I see her, an eagle renewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam; purging and unsealing her long abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance, while the whole

whole flock of timorous and noisy birds, with those that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble, would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms*.”—After this, my friend, I will now add a word of my own.—My next letter will give you some of the conversation of Montfleuri. When shall I hear from you.—And when will you indulge me with some account of your neighbours.—Pray forget not what, even in this scene, is still nearest the heart

Of your’s,

L. DESMOND.

* Milton on the liberty of unlicensed printing.

L E T T E R VIII.

T O M R. B E T H E L.

Paris, July 20, 1790.

MONTFLEURI, with whom I have passed many pleasant and instructive hours since I have been here, has desired me to go with him to his estate on the banks of the Loire, about fifteen miles from Lyons, where business will soon call him. From thence, he proposes taking me to the *chateau* of his uncle, the *ci-devant* Count d'Hauteville in Auvergne, where I am to witness the pangs of aristocracy, reluctantly and proudly yielding to a necessity which it execrates; and my friend, afterwards, accompanies me to Marseilles, where, I believe, I shall embark for Italy, or, perhaps, for the Archipelago—I know not which—It depends on I know not what. (There is a sentence a little in the Waverly style)

style)—I was, however, going to say, that it depends on the state of my mind, whether my absence from England shall be longer or shorter :—If I could return to see Geraldine happy, and not to regret that she is happy with Verney.—If I could feel, when I behold her, all that disinterested affection, which the purity of her character ought to inspire, without forming wishes and hopes that serve only to torment me, I would return through Italy in a few months to England.—You tell me absence will effect all this, and restore me to reason.—I rather hope it than believe it; and even, amidst this interesting scene, I catch myself continually carrying my thoughts to England; and imagining where Geraldine is—and enquiring whether she has not new sources of uneasiness in the increasing dissipation of her husband.

What attractions for me has her very name.—It is with difficulty I recall my pen, and my wandering spirits, to endeavour to recollect, whether I told you how
much

much disturbed poor Waverly was at the French post-horses and carriages, with which we travelled from Dunkirk; and how often he cursed his improvident haste, which had made him set out without his own horses and carriages.—At Abbeville, he seemed strongly disposed to have sent Anthony back to have fetched them; and, at Amiens, still more inclined to return and bring them himself; nor had he quite settled the debate when I came back from an absence, that was occasioned by the settlement of my poor *protégée* and her children, which I managed with less difficulty than I expected.—All this trifling I could bear from Waverly, and forgive it as boyish folly.—But it provokes my spleen to see a fellow have no more idea of the importance of the present period in France—If ever he can be brought to think about it at all, it is only to raise a debate, whether he should have resigned his title calmly, had he been a French nobleman?—which usually terminates in the
wife

wife declaration, that he should have thought it a little hard.

Now will you pique yourself upon your sagacity in foreseeing that I should be sometimes peevish at the foibles of my fellow-traveller; it is, however, merely a transitory displeasure, and one thought of Geraldine dissipates it at once.—Since we have been at Paris, there is so much to engage him, that he has been very little with me; and here are several Englishmen of his acquaintance, who have taken the trouble of deciding for him, off my hands; all my care being to help to keep him, as much as possible, from the gaming houses, in obedience to his sister's wishes, which are my laws.

While he saunters away his time in a morning in the *Palais Royale*, and in the evening at the theatres, and in suppers with the actresses, I am deeply, and more deeply interested by the politics of the country.—Montfleuri passes much of his time with me; and, therefore, I will give
you

you a sketch of his character and his history.

He is now about five-and-thirty, a fine manly figure, with a countenance ingenuous and commanding.—He has been a fop, and still retains a something of it in his dress and manner, but it is very little visible, and not at all disgusting; perhaps, less so than that negligence which many of his countrymen have lately affected, as if determined, in trifles, as well as in matters of more consequence, to change characters with us. The father of Montfleuri died in America, and as an only son, he was the darling of his mother; who, being anxious that her daughters, of whom she had four, might not be an incumbrance on an estate which his father had left a good deal embarrassed, compelled the second and the youngest of them to become nuns; and married the eldest and the third, who were remarkably beautiful, to the first men who offered.—Montfleuri had no sooner the

4 power

power by the new regulations, than he took his youngest sister, who is not yet eighteen, from the convent, where she was on the point of taking the vows; and, to the second, who has taken them, he offers an establishment in his own house, if she will leave her monastery, which is near his estate in the Lyonois.—To conquer her scruples and to prevail upon her to return to his house, is part of his immediate business in that country.—His mother, whose mistaken zeal he reveres, and for whose fondness, however unjust, he is grateful, has been dead a few months, and left him at liberty to follow the generous dictates of his heart.

It is not so easy for him to break the cruel bonds which that fatal partiality put on his other sister; I mean the third, for the eldest is a widow.—This third sister, who is called Madame de Boisbelle, I have seen; and, in finding her a very lovely and interesting woman, have, with extreme concern, heard that her husband is one of
the

the most worthless characters in France; where, however, he is not at present, being a *fier aristocrate*, and having quitted his country rather than behold it free.

Madame de Boifbelle, is now, therefore, at the hotel of her brother, with Made-moiselle Montfleuri, his younger sister; and they are to go with us to Montfleuri in a few days.

I was yesterday with Montfleuri at a visit he made to a family of fashion, where, in the evening, people of all parties assemble; and where the lady of the house piques herself upon being a *bel esprit*, and giving to her guests the utmost freedom of conversation. When we went in, a young *abbé*, who seemed to have an excellent opinion of his own abilities, was descanting on the injustice of what had been done in regard to the clergy.—The sneering tone in which he described the National Assembly, by the name of “*ces Messieurs qui ont pris la peine de nous reformer,*” * and the

* Those gentlemen who have taken the trouble to reform us.

turn of his discourse, made it evident, that under a constrained or, at least, an affected moderation and candour, he concealed principles the most inimical and malignant to the revolution.—His discourse was to this effect.

“ In every civilized country, there is no doubt of the supremacy of the church; more especially in this, where, ever since the baptism of Clovis, it has made one of the great principles of the state.—All ecclesiastical property, therefore, ought undoubtedly to be sacred; and, to invade it, is to commit sacrilege. I will not go into scriptural proofs of this axiom, I will only speak of the immortality and injustice of those measures which have been taken against it. It is well known, that much of the revenues of the church arise from gifts; from legacies given by Clovis and his pious successors; or, by other high and illustrious persons, to raise houses of piety, where the recluse and religious might pray for the repose of the souls of these eminent persons.

persons.—To fulfil these purposes, a certain number of men, renouncing the honours and emoluments of the world, have given their lives to this holy occupation; and is it not just they should enjoy the lot they have thus chosen in peace? Is it not just that, if they have resigned the pleasures of this world, they should be allowed its necessaries, while they are smoothing the passage to, or securing the happiness of the other, for those, who trust to their sanctity and their prayers?—Besides, permit me to remark, that many of the monastic estates have been waste lands, which have been cultivated and reclaimed by their former possessors; that, among the various societies of religious men, many have well earned their support, by undertaking the education of youth, while others have been employed in the charitable office of redeeming slaves from captivity.—Perhaps there might be some little disproportion between the emoluments possessed by the superior and infe-

rior clergy ; but it was always possible for these latter to rise by their zeal and good conduct ; and, I must be permitted to think, that *messieurs nos reformateurs*, have not enough considered what they were doing ; when instead of rectifying, with a tender hand, any little errors in the ecclesiastical order, they have destroyed it ; instead of pruning the tree, they have torn it forcibly up by the roots.—If the nation was distressed in its revenues, by—by—by I know not what cause, the clergy offered four hundred million of livres* towards its assistance—a generous and noble offer, which ought to have been accepted.”—The *abbé* ceased speaking with the air of a man, who thought he had not only produced arguments, but such as it would be impossible to controvert. Montfleuri, however, who seemed of another opinion, thus answered him.

“ You have asserted, Sir, that in all civilized countries, the church forms a

* Making upwards of 16 & $\frac{1}{2}$ millions sterling.

supreme branch of the legislature.—This is surely not the fact : I will not, however, enter into a discussion of how far it is so in other countries, or how far it ought to be so in any, but reply to the arguments which you have deduced from its power in our own.—You must allow me to remark, that the antiquity of an abuse is no reason for its continuance—And if the enormous wealth of the clergy be one, it ought not to be perpetuated, unless better reasons can be brought in its favor, than that it commenced at the conversion and baptism of Clovis ; who, guilty of horrible enormities, and stained with blood, was taught to hope, that, by erecting churches, and endowing monasteries, the pardon of heaven might be obtained for his crimes : and, in doing so, he certainly did not make a bad bargain for himself ; for it cost him only that of which he robbed his subjects . It was with their toil and misery he thus purchased the absolution which the monks gave him for murder and

oppression—It was their tears, and their blood, that cemented the edifices he raised*.

I believe the same may be said of the foundations made by those monarchs, whom you call his pious successors. The weak bigot Louis the Seventh—the ferocious sanguinary monster Louis the Eleventh, are, I suppose, among the most eminent of the list.—Of what efficacy those prayers might be, that were thus obtained, I shall say nothing, since that is matter of opinion.—It is plain, however, that the nation does not now believe them useful to its welfare, and therefore, with great propriety, turns into another channel, that wealth, which it no longer deems beneficial in this. I think you will not deny that the most useful of the clergy are the *curés*, who live on their cures; whose time should be given up

* Some sentences here are drawn from a little French pamphlet, entitled, "*Lettre aux Aristheo-
crate Français.*"

to the really christian and pious purposes of instructing the poor, visiting the sick, and relieving the temporal necessities of their parishioners, by such means as they possess; though it too often happened that they had hardly wherewithal to supply themselves with the necessities their humble manner of life required.—An error, in the distribution of money appropriated to the church, which, in the present system, will, I apprehend, be remedied. I cannot agree with you, that the tree is torn up by the roots: I should rather say, that its too luxuriant branches, which prevented the production of wholesome fruit, are reformed; and the whole reduced nearer to the proportion, which may secure it from being destroyed by the storms that pass by, through the disproportion of its head.—You have, Sir, declined entering into those scriptural proofs of their sacred nature, which you intimated were to be brought in support of the ancient establish-

ments; a fortunate circumstance for me, as on that ground I must have felt my inferiority.—But, from what I know of the subject, I have always supposed, that whatever spiritual resemblance there might be between the primitive fathers of the church and their present successors, there was certainly very little in their temporal conditions. It does not appear ever to have been the expectation of the saints and martyrs, that those who followed them in their holy calling, should become temporal princes, or possess such immense revenues as the higher clergy enjoyed in this country, of whom, you know, Sir, that there were some whose yearly incomes amounted to eighty, an hundred, two, three, four hundred thousand livres a year.

As to that rank of them who lived in convents, I will not enquire whether piety or idleness decided their vocation—I will believe that it may, in numerous instances, have been the former motive—and that in others, the unhappy, or the guilty, might seek,

seek, in these retreats, shelter from the miseries of life, or leisure to make their peace with heaven.—But men, carried into religious retirements by such motives, would probably be content with mere necessities of life, which are not taken from them; it is not therefore these men who complain.—To the monks, I am disposed to allow all you can urge in their favor, as to the education of youth, and the redemption of prisoners, though these merits, and particularly the latter, have been much disputed (probably from the *misrepresentation* that have been made of the manner of executing these charges)—I will go farther, and enumerate one obligation the world owes them, which you have over-looked, or do not think it of consequence enough to mention.—I mean, that to them we are indebted for the preservation of those precious reliëts of antiquity, which, but for the security which superstition enabled them to give, would have perished in the ferocious turbulence of the dark ages.

But, Sir, with all the disposition imaginable, to allow the monastic institution all the honour they can assume, I still cannot be of opinion that the good works they have given birth to, even in their utmost extent, balance the various evils which these communities occasion to the nation that supports them. As to the mendicant orders, surely the suppression of them cannot be complained of.—The vow of poverty taken by *capucins, recollets, &c. &c.* may now be executed in humble privacy, for which the state will provide during the lives of those who have taken these vows, and they will no longer be in a degraded condition of life, which must be a continual tax to the pious, while it gave to the light-minded a subject of ridicule, and to the indifferent, of disgust. I need hardly insist on the miseries to which monastic vows, made at a time of life when no civil contract would be binding, have condemned individuals of both sexes.—Wretches, who having thus thrown themselves,

selves, yet living, into the tomb, have afterwards existed only to curse their being.—I will not retouch the disgusting pictures that have been so frequently exhibited, of the wretchedness, or the vices that have prophaned these dark recesses, built for far other purposes; nor enlarge upon the deluges of blood, the variety of tortures by which the monks have established their power over the ignorance and apprehensions of mankind.—What then should prevent a nation from re-assuming grants; which, admitting they were originally given to good purposes, have long since been perverted? Certainly, Sir, you cannot assert, that *le haut clergé*, the higher rank of ecclesiastics in our day, whose declined authority and lessened revenues you regret, resemble, in any instance, those apostles who professed poverty and humility, and went about doing good?—Though I am, on the other hand, ready to admit of their resemblance to their more immediate, though still remote

predecessors, the bishops who lived as long ago as the reign of Louis le Debonnair. One of our historians* speaks of them as being, at that period, "men who were, for the most part, become great lords, possessing vast domains and many vassals; and, while they governed the minds of the people, entirely devoted to a court.—Men, whose ample revenues enabled them to gratify every worldly inclination, and to enjoy luxuries which soon made them lose sight of their spiritual duties, and neglect their original vocation."—

A young man, whom I had not till now noticed, took advantage of a pause to interrupt Montfleuri.—"Well," said he, in English, "and what then? it proves that those worthies knew how to live; and, I am sorry with all my soul, that their successors, the old bucks of our own times, are thrown out as they are.—When I was at Paris last, I was always sure of a *couvert* at the table of an archbishop, and an ex-

* Millot;

cellent table it was; then, at that time, there were many of the *haut clergé* who gave comfortable, and even elegant establishments to two or three pretty women, to whose parties one was always welcome.—Now there is an end of all that—the poor bishops are gone upon their travels, and their *chère amie's* upon the town; which, in regard to its society, I am sure is very far from being improved; for, instead of the agreeable sort of people one used to converse with, one now only meets queer fellows; who bore one to death with long preachments about their freedom, their constitution, and the rights of the people; and, after all, I don't see that any of these things are much changed for the better.—As to people, that is, the *canaille*, of whose happiness there is so much talk, I don't think, myself, that they are so much happier than they were before; indeed, I have heard it affirmed by those who are much more interested in the matter, and more acquainted with it than I am, that

G 6

they

they are not at all happier since this boasted revolution, nor at all better off.”—

Montfleuri, who had, I saw, conceived a very mean opinion of this individual, of a nation he loves and esteems, answered very calmly—“ The objection you have made, Sir, to the reduction of the higher clergy; the evils you have deduced from it are certainly most convincing.—In regard, however, to the opinions which have, you say, been delivered by good judges of the subject on the happiness of the people; perhaps, the best way of ascertaining the justice of those remarks, would be to refer you to the people themselves, as being alone competent to decide.

“ Enquire of them, whether they are not better for being relieved from the *taille*, from the *gabelle*, from the imposts levied at the gates of every town, on every necessary of life; for the relief they have obtained from those burthens that were imposed upon them, because they were poor; while their illustrious compatriots
were

were exempt, because they were noble.* Ask the aged peasant, who is no longer able to labour for his own subsistence ; ask the mother of a group of helpless children, if they are not the happier for being assured, that the son, the husband, on whom their existence depends, cannot now be torn from the paternal cottage ; and, to execute some ambitious scheme of a weak king or a wicked minister, be enrolled against their inclination in a mercenary army ?—Let the soldier, who is now armed for the defence of his country, rendered worthy of that blood he is ready to sacrifice to preserve it, tell you whether he is not happier for the consciousness that he cannot be compelled to carry devastation into another land as a slave, but shall hereafter guard his own as a freeman ;

* Ce gouvernement ferait digne des Hottentots, *says* Voltaire, dans lequel il seroit permis à un certain nombre d'hommes de dire, c'est à ceux qui travaillent à payer—Nous ne devons rien payer, parceque nous sommes oisifs.

ask the husbandman, whose labours were coldly and reluctantly performed before, when the *fermiers-general*, and the intendants of the provinces, devoured two-thirds of their labour, if they do not proceed more willingly and more prosperously to cultivate a soil from whence those locusts are driven by the breath of liberty? Enquire of the citizen, the mechanic, if he reposes not more quietly in his house from the certainty that it is not now liable to be entered by the *marechaussées*, and that it is no longer possible for him to be forcibly taken out of it by a *lettre de cachet*, in the power of a minister, or his secretary, his secretary's clerk, or his mistress? Let the voice of common sense answer, whether the whole nation has gained nothing in its dignity, by obtaining the right of trial by jury, by the reform in the courts of judicature; where, it is well known, that formerly, every thing was given to money or to favour, and to equity and justice, nothing?—As to the prejudice
that

that all these alterations have been to the manners of society, to that, indeed, I have nothing to say.—I must lament that, in shaking off the yoke, we have been so long reproached for wearing, we have not taken care to preserve, unfaded, all those elegant flowers with which it was decorated. The complaint, perhaps, is well founded, for I have heard it before; and, particularly from the ladies of your country, Sir; to whom, I am afraid, the name of a Frenchman will hereafter give no other idea than that of a savage; a misfortune which, as I greatly admire the English ladies, nobody can more truly regret than I shall.—But I shall tire you, Sir, by thus dwelling on a subject which you have just observed is very *ennuyant*; and, therefore, will leave you to Monsieur l'Abbé de Bremont, whose ideas, on public matters, seem more happily to meet your own."

Montfleuri then walked away, and, with me, joined the party of the Lady of the house,

house, who was at play in another room.—The conversation, round the table, took another turn, and we soon afterwards went away; and, as the evening was warm, strolled into the Luxembourg Gardens, where my friend continued, as I will relate in a future letter, to speak on the predisposing causes of the revolution—and on its effects.

I am so late now, as to the post, that I have only time to entreat you to write to me immediately, that I may receive your letter before I leave Paris, which will be within these fifteen days.—The ten last have past without my receiving a single line from you.—Adieu! dear Bethel,

Your's truly,

LIONEL DESMOND.

L E T^r

L E T T E R I X.

T O M R. B E T H E L.

Paris, August 4, 1790.

IT is very uneasy to me, my dear Bethel, to be so long without hearing from you.—I am willing to believe, that you are absent from Hartfield, and wandering with my little friends, Harry and Louisa, on one of your usual summer tours; and that, therefore, you have not received my letters, and know not whither to direct.—I would, indeed, rather believe any thing than that you have forgotten me, unless it be, that illness has prevented your writing. Waverly has had only two letters from his youngest sister since he left England; and they hardly mention the Verney family, as Fanny Waverly is with her mother at Bath, where they usually reside.

Were my heart less deeply interested for my friends in England, I should be quite

quite absorbed in French politics; and, could those friends be even for a little while supplied by foreign connections, the family of Montfleuri would be that where I should chuse to seek them.—But the tender interest I feel for some individuals in England, no time, no change of scene can weaken; my heart

“ Still to my country turns with ceaseless pain,
And drags at each remove a lengthening chain.”*

I will not indulge this train of thought; it will be better to continue to relate the conversation I had with Montfleuri in the latter part of that evening, of which I described the beginning in my last letter.

As we walked together towards the Luxembourg Gardens, he asked me if I knew the young Englishman, whose argument, in defence of the enormous revenues of the bishops, was so very convincing.—“ Not even by name,” answered I; “ and so far am I from wishing to enquire, that I

* Goldsmith.

would I could forget having heard such frivolous folly in my native language.”—Montfleuri smiled at the warmth with which I spoke. “I can forgive,” said he, “the short view of an unexperienced boy just come from his college, or the trifling inconsequence of a mere *petit maitre*, who knowing nothing beyond what the faunterers in a coffee-house, or the matrons of a card-table have taught him to repeat by rote; talks merely as a child recites his lesson, without being capable of affixing one idea to the sentences he utters.—Such people are perfectly harmless, or rather bring into ridicule the cause they attempt to defend; but, when I meet, as too often I have done, Englishmen of mature judgment and solid abilities, so lost to all right principles as to depreciate, misrepresent, and condemn those exertions by which *we* have obtained that liberty they affect so sedulously to defend for themselves; when they declaim in favour of an hierarchy so subversive of all true freedom, either of
thought

thought or action, and so inimical to the welfare of the people—and pretend to blame *us* for throwing off those yokes, which would be intolerable to themselves, and which they have been accustomed to ridicule us for enduring: I even hear them with a mixture of contempt and indignation, and reflect with concern on the power of national prejudice and national jealousy, to darken and pervert the understanding.

“ All, however, that I have ever heard from such men, has served only to prove to me, either that they fear for their own nation the too great political consequence of ours, when our constitution shall be established; or know and dread, that the light of reason thus rapidly advancing, which has shewn us how to overturn the massy and cumbrous edifice of despotism, will make, too evident, the faults of their own system of government, which it is their particular interest to screen from research and reformation.—But how feeble are all the endeavours of this political jealousy

ousſy on one hand, and the yet obſtinate prejudices of papal ſuperſtition on the other, to obſcure this light in its irrefiſtible and certain progreſs; more rapid and more brilliant from the vain attempt to intercept and impede it.—“ *Ne ſentez vous pas,*” ſays Voltaire very juſtly—“ *Ne ſentez vous pas, que ce qui eſt juſte, clair, évident, eſt naturellement reſpecté de tout le monde, & que des chimères ne peuvent pas toujours s’attirer la même vénération ? ** ”

“ The ſudden change that has taken place in this country, from the moſt indolent ſubmiſſion to a deſpotic government, to the adoption of principles of more enlarged liberty than your nation has ever avowed, appeared ſo aſtoniſhing, and ſo unaccountable, to thoſe who beheld the event at a diſtance, that they believed it could not be permanent. Our national character, a character given us by Cæſar, and which

* Are you not ſenſible, that what is juſt, clear, and evident, muſt be naturally attended to—And that chimæras cannot always be held in veneration ?

we are said still to retain—That vehement, fierce, and almost irresistible, in the beginning of an action, we are soon repulsed and dismayed—Encouraged the persuasion, that the revolution would prove only a violent popular commotion; and that when our first ardour was abated, the spirit of our ancient government, taking advantage of this well-known disposition of the French people, would gradually resume its influence; and perhaps, by a few concessions of little consequence, induce us to submit again to that system, which a momentary frenzy had suspended. But I, who, though as dissipated as most men, was neither an unobserving or disinterested spectator of what was passing, have for some years seen, that our government was approaching rapidly to its dissolution, and, that many causes unknown, and unsuspected, were silently uniting to accelerate its ruin.

“ The advocates for despotism consider the reigns of Henry the Fourth, and Louis
the

the Fourteenth, as evidences in favor of their system; but allowing, that the former was an excellent man, and worthy to be entrusted with the power of governing a great people (which can hardly be allowed to Louis the Fourteenth), what a black and hideous list of regal monsters may be brought to contrast so favourable a picture. The various murders and assassinations which stain the annals of the last princes of the House of Valois; and, above all, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, reflect disgrace on a nation, which, even at that dark period, could tolerate and obey such ferocious tyrants, and still more, on the sanguinary superstition which gave them a pretence to commit these enormities. The same bigotry, however, delivered his insulted country from the last of this odious race*; but it opposed, in his successor, a man who seemed born for the political salvation of his people, and who became

* Henry the Third.

afterwards the best king that France ever boasted.—Brought up like the mountaineers, over whom only it was once likely he should reign, his heart had never been hardened, nor his frame enervated by the flatteries or luxuries of a court.—He had not been taught, that to be born a king is to be born something more than man.

“The admirable dispositions he had received from nature, were so much improved in the rigid school of adversity, in which so many years of his life were passed, that his character was fixed, and prosperity and power could not destroy those sentiments of humanity and goodness which made him, throughout his whole reign (even amidst the too liberal indulgence of some weaknesses and errors) consider the happiness of his people as the first object of his government. But his life was embittered, and his endeavours for the good of his subjects continually opposed, by the restless suspicion, and encroaching ambition of the priests of that religion, to which, to

save the effusion of his people's blood, he was a reluctant, and perhaps, not a very sincere convert. Till at length the same execrable fanaticism raised against him the murderous hand of Ravillac, and with him perished the hopes of France; a nation that, had he lived, would probably have possessed prosperity and happiness, with a considerable portion of political liberty.

“The treasure that the wise œconomy of the Duc de Sully had amassed for him, to carry on his projects, which would have secured a long and universal peace, were instantly, on his death, dissipated among the hungry and selfish nobility that surrounded his widow*.

“The early part of the reign of the weak and peevish bigot his son, Louis the Thirteenth, was marked by a faint attempt to restore something like a voice to the people, by a convocation of *les états généraux*†.

* Mary of Medicis.

† The last assembly of that description that was called in France.

“ But this was rather an effort of the nobility against the hated power of the Italian favourites, the Conchinis, than meant to restore to the people any part of their lost rights.

“ The whole of this reign was rendered odious by the continual wars on the subject of religion, which deluged the country with blood ; by the factions, which existed even in the family of the prince upon the throne ; where the mother was armed against her son, the son against his mother ; and the brothers against each other.—All practising, in turn, every artifice that perfidy and malignity could imagine ; and sacrificing every thing to their own worthless views.—When to these ruinous circumstances was added an ambitious aristocracy, ready on every occasion to take advantage of the weakness of the monarch, and the discord in his councils, it is easily seen that nothing but the resolute courage, and strong talents of Richelieu could have prevented the total destruc-

destruction of France as a monarchy ; it would, but for him, have been broken into small republics, and small principalities ; the first would have been possessed by the Huguenots, and the latter by the principal nobility ; who, when ever they opposed the court, and flew into rebellion, revolted not against measures, but men.—It was the favourites of Louis the Thirteenth that provoked them, and not the encreasing oppression of the people.—The unhappy and plundered people, who equally the victims of the monarch, the nobles, and the priests, were pillaged and destroyed by them all.

But the thick cloud of ignorance which covered Europe, was yet but slowly and partially rolling away : it was during this period that Galileo was imprisoned in Italy* for his discoveries in astronomy ; and

* “There I visited,” says Milton, “ the celebrated Galileo, then poor and old, and a long time a prisoner in the dungeon of the Inquisition, for daring to think otherwise in astronomy than his Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought.”

that Descartes was accused of impiety and atheism.

“The reign of Louis the Fourteenth was more propitious to knowledge.—His encouragement of science and literature has, in the immortality it has conferred upon him, led many writers to forget the ostentatious despot, in the munificent patron.—Fascinated by his manners, dazzled by the magnificence of his public works, and elated by his victories, his people felt for him the most enthusiastic attachment, and loved even his vices; vices which the servile crowd of nobles around him, found it their interest to imitate and applaud; while the priests also made their advantage of these errors, obtaining by them the means of dictating to a man who was at once a libertine and a *devoté*.—The revocation of the edict of Nantz; the cruel and absurd persecution of the Protestants, were among the follies that they led him to commit; and depopulated and impoverished his country, which, at his death, soon after the close of an unsuccessful

cessful war, was in a state of almost total bankruptcy ; yet, so bigotted were we then to the system of passive obedience, so attached to unlimited monarchy, that throughout the long reign of his great-grandson,* the murmurs of the people were feeble and disregarded ; though their burthens were intolerable, though they were imposed by a prince who, without any of the virtues of his predecessor, had more than his vices ; and, though the sums thus extorted from the hard hands of patient industry, were either expended in disgraceful and ill-managed wars, or lavished in the debaucheries of the most profligate court† that modern Europe has beheld. From the infamous means that to support all this, were then practised to raise money ; from the heavy imposts that were then laid on the country, France has never recovered ; but, perhaps, in the *discontents* which these oppressions created, silent and unmarked as they were,

* Louis the Fifteenth.

† See la Vie privée de Louis XV.

the foundation was laid for the universal spirit of revolt, to which she is now indebted for her freedom.

“In the mean-time, the progress of letters, which Louis the Fourteenth had encouraged, was insensibly dispelling that ignorance that alone could secure this blind obedience.—The president, Montesquieu had done as much as a writer, under a despot, dared to do, towards developing the spirit of the laws, and the true principles of government; and, though the multitude heeded not, or understood not his abstract reasoning, he taught those to think, who gradually disseminated his opinions. Voltaire attacked despotism in all its holds, with the powers of resistless wit.—Rousseau with matchless eloquence:—and, as these were authors who, to the force of reason, added the charms of fancy, they were universally read, and their sentiments were adopted by all classes of men.

“The political maxims and œconomical systems of Turgot, and the application
of

of these principles by Mirabeau, excited a spirit of enquiry, the result of which could not fail of being favourable to the liberties of mankind ; and such was the disposition of the people of France, when the ambitious policy of our ministry sent our soldiers into America to support the English colonists in their resistance to the parent state."

I here interrupted my friend, by remarking, that so deep is the resentment which the English still entertain against his nation for this interference, that I had heard many rejoicing over the most unpromising picture they could draw of the present state of France ; and, when they have imagined the country deluged with blood, and perishing by famine, have said—" Oh ! the French deserve it all for what they did against us in America."—

" And yet, my dear Sir," answered Montfleuri, " these good countrymen of your's are a little inconsiderate and inconsistent ; inconsiderate in not reflecting, that the inter-

ference which seems so unpardonable, was the act of the cabinet, not of the people, who had no choice, but went to be shot at for the liberties of America, without having any liberty at all of their own; and, inconsistent inasmuch, as they now exclaim against the resolution we have made to deprive our monarchs of the power of making war; a power which they thus complain has been so unwarrantably exerted—These are some of the many absurdities into which a resolution to defend a pernicious system, betrays its ablest advocates. However, our court has found its punishment; blinded by that restless desire of conquest, and their jealousy of the English, which has ever marked its politics, our government did not reflect that they were thus tacitly encouraging a spirit subversive to all their views; nor foresee, that the men who were sent out to assist in the preservation of American freedom, would soon learn that they were degraded by being themselves slaves; and
would

would return to their native country to feel and to assert their right to be themselves free.

“ I was then a very young man ; but my father, who was a colonel in the regiment of Nassau, and who died in America, took me with him in despite of the tears and entreaties of my mother.—I saw there such scenes as have left an indelible impression on my mind, and an utter abhorrence for all who, to gratify their own wild ambition, or from even worse motives, can deliberately animate the human race to become butchers of each other.—Above all, it has given me a detestation of civil war, for the fiercest animosity with which the French and English armies have met in the field, was mildness and friendship in comparison of the ferocity felt by the English and Americans, men speaking the same language, and originally of the same country, in their encounters with each other. I saw, amidst the almost undisciplined Americans, many instances of

that enthusiastic courage which animates men who contend for all that is dear to them, against the iron hand of injustice; and, I saw these exertions made too often vain, against the disciplined mercenaries of despotism; who, in learning to call them rebels, seemed too often to have forgotten that they were men. How little did I then imagine, that a country which seemed to be devoted to destruction, could ever be in such a state as that in which I have since beheld it.—Yes, my friend, I revisited this country two years since, in which fourteen years I had served as an ensign, when it was the seat of war.—I see it now recovered of those wounds, which its unnatural parent hoped were mortal, and in the most flourishing state of political health.

“What then becomes of the political credit of those who prognosticated, that her productions would be unequal to her wants; her legislatures to her government.—I know not how far the mother-country
is

is the worse for this disunion with her colonies—but, I am sure, they are the better; and, nothing is more false than that idea of the veteran statesmen, that a country, under a new form of government, is destitute of those who have ability to direct it.—That they may be unlearned in the detestable chicane of politics, is certain; but, they are also uncorrupted by the odious and pernicious maxims of the unfeeling tools of despotism; honest ministers then, and able negotiators will arise with the occasion.—They have appeared in America; they are rising in France—they have, indeed, arisen; and, when it is seen that talents and application, and not the smile of a mistress, or a connection with a parasite, give claims to the offices of public trust; men of talents and application will never be wanting to fill them.”

Montfleuri here paused a moment; and a sentence of Milton's, of whom you know I am an incessant reader, immediately occurred to me as extremely ap-

plicable to what he had been saying; I repeated it to him in English, which he understands perfectly well.

“ For, when God shakes a kingdom, with strong and healthful commotions, to a general reformatory, it is not untrue that many sectaries and false teachers are then busiest in seducing: but yet more true it is, that God then raises, to his own work, men of rare abilities and more than common industry; not only to look back and revise what hath been taught heretofore, but to gain further, and go on some new and enlightened steps in the discovery of truth.” *

Here our conference was ended for this time, at least, on politics. We took a few turns among the happy groups who were either walking, or sitting, to enjoy the most beautiful moon-light evening I ever remember to have seen; and I then returned to my hotel, and went to my repose, determined to indulge the pleasing hope of having letters from England on

* Milton on the Liberty of unlicensed Printing;

the morrow, as it was post day ; but, I am again most severely disappointed.—Waverly, however, has letters from his sisters—they lay on the table in the room where we usually sit, for he is gone with, I know not what party, to Chantilly.—I see that one of them is directed by the hand of Geraldine.—I have taken it up an hundred times, and laid it down again—It is sealed with an impression of the Verney arms—It is heavy, and seems to contain more than one or two sheets of paper ; perhaps, there is a letter in it for me.—Yet, why should I flatter myself?—The other letter is from Fanny Waverly—I recollect her hand, for it a little resembles her sister's.—Would to heaven Waverly was come back—He went on a sudden, and named no time for his return ; and my time, these last two days, has been wasted in the most uneasy expectation ; for I can think of nothing but the purport of these letters.—If they assure me of the health and content of Mrs. Verney, for I will

will try to break myself of calling her Geraldine (because I always long to add *my* to that beloved name)—I will endeavour to account, dear Bethel, for your silence, by believing that you are travelling with your children; and set out as chearfully as I can, with Montfleuri and his sisters, on Monday, which is the day fixed for our departure.—I hoped, a few days ago, that I had determined Waverly to go with us, but he has since made some new acquaintance, and has probably new schemes.

Adieu! You know me to be ever

most faithfully your's,

LIONEL DESMOND.

L E T T E R X.

Montfleuri, August 29, 1790.

AFTER being once more compelled to change my plan on account of the indecision of Waverly, who did not return to Paris till some days after he had written to me to say he should be there; he arrived, and I saw these letters, which alone would have induced me to wait.—But I was extremely mortified to find, that instead of an account of Geraldine herself, it was only a long letter about health and prudence, which Mrs. Waverly, who has the gout herself, has employed her daughter to write for her to her son. In a postscript, however, she adds some trifling commissions on her own account, which, as Waverly set out the next day for Rheims, with the same campering party with whom he was just returned from Chantilly, he left for me to execute: judge whether I did not under-
take

take them with pleasure, with delight, and whether I regretted the two days longer that were thus passed in her service at Paris.—This circumstance gave me an opportunity of writing to her.—And so, my dear Bethel, I shall have a letter from her before I quit this place, whither I have entreated her to direct. Do not now give me one of your grave, cold lectures—and blame me for the inconsistency of flying from my country to conquer a passion which I still take every opportunity of cherishing.—Without this affection, I feel that my life would sink into lifeless apathy; and I cannot, my rigid Mentor, discover the immorality of it, in its present form. On the contrary, I am convinced, that my apprehensions of rendering myself unworthy of the esteem, which, I now believe, Geraldine feels for me, acts upon me as a sort of second conscience.—What ought not that man to attempt, who dares hope ever to become worthy of her heart?—But I dare not; nor do I ever trust myself with

so presumptuous a thought.—Her friendship, her esteem, may be mine—But I am getting into regions, where your cold and calm philosophy cannot, or will not follow me.

I return, therefore, to mere matter of fact; and to thank you for your long-expected and long wished-for letter.—It is tolerably interspersed with lectures, my good friend—but I thank you for them, because I know they are the effusions of anxious friendship—and still more, I thank you for the account you give me of yourself, your children, and all other friends, for whom you think I am interested, except the Verneys, whom you cruelly leave out of the list—and relative to them, therefore, I form many uneasy conjectures, so that, instead of saving me from pain, you have inflicted it; my apprehensions, probably, go beyond the truth; but Geraldine is unhappy, I know she is.—In every English newspaper that I have seen since I left London, there is some account of
Verney's

Verney's exploits upon the turf—and of his winnings or his losings.—Some of Waverly's acquaintance, whom I accidentally conversed with at Paris, spoke of him in terms of high approbation, as to use their own cant, “a devilish dashing fellow—a good fellow”—and such epithets as convinced me he is sacrificing the happiness of that lovely woman to the glory of being talked of—The only species of fame which seems to give him any pleasure.

I am now at Montfleuri, in the Lyonois.—Had I not felt, as I travelled hither, a strange, uneasy sensation, which I acknowledge to be a weakness, in reflecting on the encreasing distance between me and Geraldine; and had I not very uneasy apprehensions about her brother, who is gone with a set of very dissipated boys, they hardly know whither themselves, my journey to this place would have been one of the most agreeable I ever made.

I have twice before travelled the direct road from Paris to Lyons.—Montfleuri,
who

who is the most chearful companion in the world, has himself a great taste for rural beauty, and therefore, though every part of this country is, of course, well known to him, he had particular pleasure in turning out of the road to shew me any view, or building, which he thought worth my observation. Our journey, by this means, was of eight days continuance—and eight days have been seldom more pleasantly passed.

I have said very little hitherto of Montfleuri's two sisters, who are with us; and who are by no means objects to be passed in silence, in the account you wish to have of my wanderings.—Though I, you know, “bear a charmed heart,” and therefore cannot, like our friend Melthorpe, enliven my narrative with details of my own passions for a sprightly French woman, or an elegant Italian. I am persuaded, that were I to be shewn, in succession, the most celebrated beauties of all the kingdoms
through

through which I shall pass, I thus should still apostrophise Geraldine :

“ I scorn the beauties, common eyes adore,
The more I view them—feel thy charms the more.

But I am talking of her instead of Madam de Boisselle, who is very beautiful and very unhappy, two circumstances that cannot fail to make her extremely interesting; perhaps she is rendered yet more so by the unfailing variety of her manner.—There are times when her natural gay spirits sink under the pressure of misfortune; sometimes her ill-assorted marriage, which has put her into the power of a man altogether unworthy of her, the embarrassment of his affairs, and the uncertainty of her fate, recur to her in all their force; and she escapes from company, if it be possible, to hide the languor and depression she cannot conquer. During our journey, however, this was not easily done, and I often remarked with pain these cruel reflections fill her fine eyes with tears

ears, and force deep sighs from her bosom.—But this disposition was as a passing cloud obscuring the brilliancy of the summer sun.—The moment her attention is diverted from this mournful and useless contemplation, by some new object, or yields to the tender raillery of her brother, who is extremely fond of her, the gayest smiles return again to her expressive countenance; her eyes regain their lustre, and she passes almost instantaneously from anguished dejection, to most brilliant vivacity.—Without having ever had what we call a good education, Josephine (for I have learned from her brother, and at her own desire, to drop the formal appellation of Madame de Boisbelle) Josephine has much of that sort of knowledge which makes her a pleasant companion; and a fund of native wit, which, though it is rather sparkling than impressive, renders her conversation very delightful.—She has a pretty voice, and plays well on the harp.—Yet all she does has so much of national character

character in it, that it would become only a French woman, and I think I should not admire one of my own countrywomen, who possessed exactly the person, talents and manners of my friend's sister.—I do not know whether you perfectly understand me, but I understand myself; though, perhaps, I do not explain myself clearly.

The little mild Julie is yet too young to have any very decided character.—The religious prejudices which she received in her early infancy (for at nine years old her mother determined to make her a nun) have sunk so deeply in her mind, that I much doubt whether they will ever be erased. This has given to her disposition a melancholy cast, which, though it renders her, perhaps, interesting to strangers, her brother sees with concern.—I perceive that there is, at times, a very painful struggle in her mind, between her wish to obey and gratify him in entering into the world, and her fears of offending Heaven by having failed to renounce it; and, I

am afraid, there are moments which any absurd bigot might take advantage of, to persuade her, that she should yet return to that state whither Heaven has summoned her.

Julie, however, is extremely pretty, though quite in another style of beauty from her sister.—Waverly admired her, on first seeing her, as much as it is in his nature to admire any woman; and, for three days, I fancied it possible that the fair and pensive nun might fix this vagrant spirit. I even began to consider, how (if the affair should become more serious) Geraldine, as much as she wishes her brother married, would approve of his choosing a woman of another country, and another religion from his own; and, I had settled it with myself, to give no encouragement to the progress of his attachment, till I knew her sentiments.—I might, however, have saved myself all my wise resolutions, for Waverly immediately afterwards making some fortunate additions

additions to his number of English acquaintance (Mr. Chetwood, the able advocate for episcopalian luxury is one) has since passed all his time among them; and seems to have lost, in their company, every impression that the gentle Julie, and her fascinating, though very imperfect English, had made.—He has promised, either to come hither within ten days, or to meet me at Lyons in the course of a fortnight; but I do not expect that he will do either the one or the other.

I do not know whether you love the description of places, or whether I am very well qualified to undertake it, if you do.—However, I will endeavour to give you an idea of the habitation of Montfleuri, and of the country round it, where his liberal and enlightened spirit has, ever since he became his own master, been occupied in softening the harsh features of that *system of government, to which only the poverty and misery of such a country as this could, at any time, be owing.*

The

The *chateau* of Montfleuri is an old building, but it is neither large nor magnificent—for having no predilection for the gothic gloom in which his ancestors concealed their greatness, he has pulled down every part of the original structure, but what was actually useful to himself; and brought the house, as nearly as he could, into the form of one of those houses, which men of a thousand or twelve hundred a year inhabit in England.

Its situation is the most delicious that luxuriant fancy could imagine.—It stands on a gentle rise, the river there, rather broad than deep, makes almost a circuit round it at the distance of near half a mile.—The opposite banks rise immediately on the south side into steep hills of fantastic forms, cloathed with vines.—They are naturally indeed, little more than rocks; but wherever the soil was deficient, the industry of the labourers, who are in that district the tenants of Montfleuri, has supplied it; and the wine produced in this

little mountainous tract is particularly delicious. These pointed hills suddenly sink into a valley, or rather a narrow pass, which thro' tufts of cypress that grow among the rocks, gives a very singular view into the country beyond them.—Another chain of hills then rise; and these last were the property of a convent of monks, whose monastery is not more than a mile from the house of my friend.—In the culture of these two adjoining ridges of vineyards, may be seen the effects of the management of the different masters to whom they belong.—The peasants on the domain of Montfleuri are happy and prosperous, while in the line of country immediately adjoining to his, though the good fathers have taken tolerable care of their vineyards, has every where else the appearance of being under a languid and reluctant cultivation.—On the top of one of the highest of these hills is the ruin of a large ancient building, of which the country people tell wonderful legends. I have never yet explored it,
but

but it is a fine object from the windows of this house ; and I rejoice, that Montfleuri, who has purchased the estate of the convent, will now be able to preserve it in its present romantic form, from the farther depredations of the neighbouring hinds, who, whenever their fears yielded to their convenience, were in habits of carrying away the materials for their own purposes ; and have, by those means, done more than time towards destroying this monument of antiquity.—I, who love, you know, every thing ancient, unless it be ancient prejudices, have entreated my friend to preserve this structure in its present state—than which, nothing can be more picturesque : when of a fine glowing evening, the almost perpendicular hill on which it stands is reflected in the unruffled bosom of the broad river, crowned with these venerable remains, half mantled in ivy, and other parasitical plants, and a few cypresses, which grow here as in Italy, mingling

their spiral forms among the masses of ruin.

The whole of the ground between the house and the river, is the paternal estate of Montfleuri.—It is now divided, the lower grounds into meadows, and the higher into corn inclosures, nearly as we separate our fields in England.—The part most immediately adjoining to the house he has thrown into a paddock, and cut those long avenues, which in almost every direction pointed towards the house into groups of trees: breaking as much as possible the lines they would yet describe, by young plantations of such trees as are the most likely, by their quick growth, to overtake them in a few years.—But, I am not quite sure, that I do not wish he had left one vista of the beautiful and graceful Spanish chestnut remaining.—I know this betrays a very gothic and exploded taste, but such is the force of early impressions, that I have still an affection for “the bowed
roof”

roof"—the cathedral-like solemnity of long lines of tall trees, whose topmost boughs are interlaced with each other.—I do not, however, defend the purity of my taste in this instance; for nature certainly never planted trees in direct lines.—But I account for my predelection, by the kind of pensive and melancholy pleasure I used to feel, when in my childhood and early youth, I walked alone, in a long avenue of arbeal, which led from a very wild and woody part of the weald of Kent, to an old house my father, at that period of my life, inhabited. I remember the cry of the wood-peckers, or yaffils, as we call them in that country, going to roost in a pale autumnal evening, answered by the owls, which in great numbers inhabit the deep forest-like glens that lay behind the avenue.—I see the moon rising slowly over the dark mafs of wood, and the opposite hills, tinged with purple from the last reflection of the sun, which was sunk behind them.—I recall the sensations I felt,

when, as the silver leaves of the aspens trembled in the lowest breeze, or slowly fell to the ground before me, I became half frightened at the encreasing obscurity of the objects around me, and have almost persuaded myself that the grey trunks of these old trees, and the low murmur of the wind among their branches, were the dim forms, and hollow sighs of some supernatural beings; and at length, afraid of looking behind me, I have hurried breathless into the house.

No such sombre tints as these, however, shade the environs of Montfauri's habitation. Ever since he became master of this place, which, till then had been very much neglected, he has been endeavouring to bring it as near as possible to those plans of comfort and convenience which he saw were followed in England, and of which, it must be acknowledged, the French, in general, have not hitherto had much idea. In this pursuit, he has succeeded much better than I ever saw it done
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in France before ; and were it not for a few obstinate and prominent features that belong to French buildings, which it is almost impossible for him to remove, it would be easy for me to imagine myself in some of the most beautiful parts of England.—A little fancy would convert the vineyards into hop-gardens (if hops could be supposed to grow on such eminences) ; nor would they be much injured by the comparison ; for, when the vine of either is in leaf, the hop, seen at a distance, has the most agreeable appearance.—At other times, neither the one or the other are, as far as the beauty of the landscape is considered, very desirable objects.

At this season, however, when the peasantry around the *chateau* of Montfleuri are preparing for the vintage—when the people, happy from their natural disposition, the effect of soil and climate—happy in a generous and considerate master ; (and now more rationally happy, from the certainty they enjoy, that no changes can put them,

as once it might have done, into the power of one who may not inherit his virtues) when they are making ready to avail themselves of this joyous season. The expression of exultation and content on their animated faces, is one of my most delicious speculations.

Montfleuri, whose morality borders, perhaps, a little on epicurism, imagines, that in this world of ours, where physical and unavoidable evil is very thickly sown, there is nothing so good in itself, or so pleasing to this Creator of the world, as to enjoy and diffuse happiness. He has therefore, whether he has resided here or no, made it the business of his life to make his vassals and dependents content, by giving them all the advantages their condition will allow.—The effect of this is, that instead of squalid figures inhabiting cabins built of mud, without windows or floors, which are seen in too many parts of France (and which must continue to be seen, till the

the benign influence of liberty is generally felt). The peasantry in this domain resemble both in their own appearance, and in the comfortable look of their habitations, those whose lot has fallen in those villages of England*, where, the advantages

* The English have a custom of arrogantly boasting of the fortunate situation of the common people of England.—But let those, who, with an opportunity of observation, have ever had an enquiring eye and a feeling heart on this subject, say whether this pride is well founded. At the present prices of the requisites of mere existence, a labourer, with a wife and four or five children, who has only his labour to depend upon, can taste nothing but bread, and not always a sufficiency of that. Too certain it is, that (to say nothing of the miseries of the London poor, too evident to every one who passes through the streets) there are many, very many parts of the country, where the labourer has not a subsistence even when in constant work, and where, in cases of sickness, his condition is deplorable indeed—realizing the melancholy, but just picture, drawn in Knox's Essay, No. 150, entitled, "A Remedy for Discontent."—Yet we are always affecting to talk of the misery and beggary of the French—And now

tages of a good landlord, a favourable situation for employment, or an extensive adjoining common, enable the labourers to possess something more than the mere *necessaries* of life, and happily counteract the effects of those heavy taxes with which all those necessaries of life are loaded.

Oh! my friend! let those of our *soi-disant* great men who love power, and who are, with whatever reluctance, compelled at length to see, and the hour is very rapidly approaching, when usurped power will be tolerated no longer:—Let them, if nothing but the delight of governing will satisfy them, have recourse to the method Montfleuri has pursued; and then, the best and sincerest of all homage, the homage of grateful hearts may be theirs.—I am convinced, that not even the family pride which, in feudal times, actuated the Irish and Scottish clans, could produce,

impute that misery, though we well know it existed before, to the revolution.—To the very cause that will in a very few years remove it.

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in the cause of their chieftains, a zeal so ardent and so steady, as that with which the dependents of Montfleuri would defend him at home, or follow him into the field, were there occasion for either.

It is, indeed, a singular sight, to observe the mutual attachments that exist between this gay and volatile man, and his neighbours, whom he will not allow to be called dependents, since no beings, he says, capable of procuring their own subsistence are dependent.—He enters, however, with rational but warm solicitude into the interests of the humblest of them, and should not, he says, be happy if there was among them an aching heart which he had neglected to put at ease, whenever it depended on him.

The neighbourhood, however, of the *seignery* which belongs to the monks, was, till now, a great impediment to all the plans which his benevolence suggested to him.—These reverend fathers encouraged in idleness, those whom Montfleuri was

endeavouring to render industrious ; and, the alms given away at the gates of the convent, without affording a sufficient or permanent support to the poorer class of his people, was yet enough to give them an excuse for indolence, and a habit of neglecting to seek their own subsistence ; in many other instances too, the influence of the monks has counteracted that of Montfleuri.—It is not quite three years since he lost near a third of the adults, and a fourth of the children of his villages, by a malignant small-pox that broke out among them ; for the monks had taught the people to believe, that inoculation, which he had long earnestly wished to introduce, was an impious presumption offensive to heaven.

These men, however, are now dispersed ; those who adhere to the monastic vows, are gone into other communities ; others have taken advantage of the late change to return to that world which they had reluctantly renounced ; and one only, among two-and-twenty, accepted the offer
which

which Montfleuri made to those whom he thought the most respectable among them; and whom he, therefore, wished to save from any inconveniences that might attend an involuntary removal.—This proposal was to fit up one of the wings of the house (which he had destined for other purposes) for the reception of those who chose to stay; and of supplying to them, at his own expence, every gratification to which they had been accustomed, that their reduced income did not enable them to enjoy.—Most of those to whom this generous offer was made, treated it either with resentment or scorn: father Cypriano, a Portuguese, who has lost all attachment to his own country, or for some reason or other does not wish to return to it, accepted the proposed accommodation, with some little changes, according to a plan of his own.—He told Montfleuri, that though he had no great attachment to any of the members of the society, yet that there would be something particularly com-

comfortless in residing alone, where he had been accustomed to see so many of his brethren around him ; and that, though he in reality courted solitude in preference to society, it was not exactly there he wished to enjoy it ; but, that if Montfleuri would allow the workmen employed about the house to raise for him, in a sequestered spot which he pointed out, a sort of hermitage after a plan of his own, he would be happy to avail himself of his bounty, and to end his days on his estate. —I need hardly say, that my friend most readily acceded to his wishes ; and, during his late absence, father Cypriano has, on the rocky borders of the river, which are there concealed by some of the thickest woods I have seen in France, built an hermitage exactly corresponding to the ideas I had formed of those sort of habitations from Don Quixote or Gil Blas.—It is partly an excavation in the hard sand rock that rises above the river ; it is situated about two hundred yards from it,

and is partly composed of rough wood, which supports the roof, and enlarges the scite of the building (if building it may be called.) The outward room is paved with flat stones, and the inner is boarded; there, is his little bed, his crucifix, and two chairs.—The other apartment contains only a table; the seats of turf and moss, that surround it, and a sort of recess where he puts his provisions, which are furnished him daily from Montfleuri, with an attentive liberality, of which the good anchoret even complains, though he never refuses it.—Montfleuri tells me that there is something singular in the history of this venerable man, with which he is not acquainted; but that, as he seems very communicative, he will endeavour, some day when we are together, to engage him in an account of his life.

This anchoret, as a being to which we are never accustomed (unless it be to a hired or to a wax hermit in some of our gardens) has led me away strangely from
what

what I was going to tell you of the use to which Montfleuri has destined the dissolved monastery.

He has fitted it up as an house of industry ; not to confine the poor to work, for he abhors the idea of compulsion, but to furnish with easy and useful employment, such as by age, or infirmity, or infancy, are unfitted for the labour of the fields.—And here he also means that the robust peasant may, when the rigour of the season, or any other circumstance deprives him of occupation abroad, find something to do within ; nothing, however, in the way of manufactures is to be attempted, farther than strong coarse articles, useful to themselves, or in the culture of the estate.—I think the sketch Montfleuri has given me of his plan an admirable one ; it is yet only in its first infancy ; but, if it succeeds, as I am sure it must, I will establish such an house on my own estate, whenever I settle there.

When.

Whenever I settle there !—Ah ! Bethel, that expreffion recalls a thouſand painful ideas from which I have been vainly trying to eſcape.—Alas ; I ſhall never settle there ! or, if ever I do, it will be as a ſolitary and inſulated being, whoſe pleaſure will ſoon become merely animal and ſelfiſh, becauſe there will be none to ſhare them.—A being who, though weary of the world, will find no happineſs in quitting it.—Methinks I ſee myſelf rambling at four or five-and-fifty, over grounds which I ſhall have none to inherit ; and ſurveying, with the dull eye of torpid apathy, improvements which, when I am gone, there will be none to admire ; and which will then, perhaps,

“ Paſs to a ſcrivener, or a city knight.”

Yes, I ſhall be, I doubt not, that forlorn and ſelfiſh being, an old batchelor ; one, who having no dearer ties to ſweeten his weary exiſtence, is ſurrounded by hungry paraſitical relations, or is governed in his ſecond childhood by his houſe-keeper.

You

You will smile, I suppose, at this apostrophe, and would even laugh, when you know the moment at which it occurs—when the lovely, the bewitching Josephine herself, is waiting for me to walk with her; and, “in these sportive plains, under this genial sun, where, at this instant, all flesh is running out, piping, fiddling, and dancing to the vintage, and every step that’s taken, the judgment is surprised by the imagination.”*—How shall I resist her?—The first grapes are to be gathered in a few days on the opposite hills; the peasants singing the liveliest airs, have been this evening carrying up their implements for this delightful operation;—Julie and her brother are gone already to see them; and Josephine sent me, a few moments since, a note, in which she gaily reproaches me for want of gallantry in thus making her wait this lovely evening. Oh! were it but Geraldine who expected me!—were it Geraldine who waited for

* Sterne.

ne, to lend her my arm in this little expedition.—I have once or twice, as Madame de Boisselle has been walking with me, tried to fancy her Geraldine, and particularly when she has been in her plaintive moods. I have caught sounds that have, for a moment, aided my desire to be deceived.—But, as the lady herself could not guess what made me so silent and inattentive, some sudden *etourderie* not at all in harmony with my feelings; some trait, in the character of her country, has suddenly dissolved the charm, and awakened me to a full sense of the folly I was guilty of.

But I see, at this moment, Josephine herself, who condescends to beckon to me, and to express her impatience at my delay.—Farewell, my friend, I shall hardly write again from hence.

Ever your's most faithfully,

LIONEL DESMOND.

L E T-

L E T T E R X I.

T O M R. D E S M O N D.

Hartfield, September 20

“ IN those sportive plains, and under this genial sun, where, at this instant, all flesh is running out piping, fiddling, and dancing to the vintage; and every feast that is taken, the judgment is surprised by the imagination.”—With the lovely Josephine beckoning to you as you sit at your window!—and reproaching you for want of gallantry!—

Bravo, my friend!—This will do—see, that though my first advice did not succeed, my second infallibly will.—“ Go search in England for some object worthy of those affections which, placed as they are now, can only serve to render you miserable—Or if that does not do—if you are become, through the influence of this romanti

romantic attachment, too fastidious for reasonable happiness—go abroad, dissipate your ideas, instead of suffering them to dwell continually on a hopeless pursuit; and you will find change of place and variety of scenes are the best remedies for every disease of the mind.”—Thus I preached; and I now value myself on the success of my prescription, though I did not foresee this kind Josephine, who will undoubtedly perfect the cure.—At your age, my good friend, a lovely and unfortunate woman—who probably tells you all her distresses—who leans on your arm, and whose voice you endeavour to fancy the tender accents of Geraldine—will, I will venture to prophecy, soon cease to please you, notwithstanding you “bear a charmed heart,” only in the semblance of another.—And as to any engagements, you know, such as her having a husband, and so forth, those little impediments “make not the heart fore” in France. In short, I look upon your cure as nearly perfected, and by the
time

time this letter reaches you, I doubt not but that you will have begun to wonder how you could ever take up such a notice as of an unchangeable and immortal passion which is a thing never heard or thought of, but by the tender novel writer, and their gentle readers.—Madame de Belle seems the Woman in the world best calculated to win you from the absurd system you had built; and had you been descendant of Lord Chesterfield's, and his spirit presided over your destiny, he could hardly have led you to a scene so favourable to dissuatory gallantry, and so fatal to the immortality of your attachment to the house of Montfleur.

Thus, believing your cure certain, I venture to tell you what I know of Verney.—You will still, perhaps, receive it with concern; but it will no longer awaken your quixotism.—You will not, I think, now offer Verney half your estate to save his wife from an uneasy moment; or furnish yourself of nine or ten thousand pounds
supp

supply his deficiencies at Newmarket, where the next meeting would probably create the same deficiency, and, of course, the same necessity.

Verney, then, I am sorry to say, has at length parted with his estate in this country : I am more sorry to say, that he has parted with it to Stamford, to whom, as I have been lately informed, it has been long mortgaged.

The final settlement of this matter, which has, I find, been sometime in agitation, has happened only within this month ; and in consequence of it, Mr. Stamford, or, I should rather say, Sir Robert Stamford, for he is almost as lately raised to the dignity of a Baronet, took possession, about ten days since, of the house, which he bought ready furnished, and he is, for the present, living there with his family. I am not, as you will easily believe, much delighted with this, either on his own account, or because of the stile of living which he will introduce into the country.

country. A very small part of his grounds adjoins to my wood-lands.—He is said to be a very great savage, in regard to game; and though I care very little myself about that perpetual subject of country contention, it will be very disagreeable to me to have my tenant subject to the vexations of this petty tyrant.—I do not know whether I have told you of the places he now enjoys, nor how they have enabled him to encrease the splendor of his appearance, or the luxury of his table, by which he strengthens his interest. In the latter, he is said to excel, from talents and taste; and that more good dinners have of late been eaten at his house for the benefit of the English government, by those who are intrusted to carry it on, than have ever before been prepared for the like purposes.—He is supposed to be one of those fortunate persons, who, being deep in the secret, are enabled to take advantage of every fluctuation, to which the proceedings of ministry give rise, in the value of the public funds; and

by this means principally, to have secured beyond the reach of fortune, that wealth which he has so rapidly, and, in the apprehension of many people, so wonderfully accumulated.—He has already, since his immediate neighbourhood gives him a considerable degree of interest with the tradesmen of W——, been courting their favor, with a meanness, equal to that arrogance with which he treats all who are, or may be, his equals; and from whom he expects nothing equal to the cringing servility with which he fawns upon his titled friends, and those who have helped to raise him to his present seat; or the junto, by whose united strength he means to keep it.—

I have forgot poor Verney's affairs in my account of this great man: but I own the incident of his coming into this neighbourhood has vexed me, more, perhaps, than it ought to do.—I shall not feel it very pleasant to absent myself from those public meetings, which, as a magistrate, I have thought it my duty to attend, be-

cause *Sir Robert* will now take the chair on account of his new rank.—Yet, certainly, I shall as little like to meet a man, by whom I know I have been grossly and irreparably injured ; and whose private and public character are equally hateful to me.—To him, I may well address the lines of Shakespeare,

————— “ Your heart
“ Is crammed with arrogancy, spleen, and pride ;
“ You have by fortune, and your friends high
 favor,
“ Gone lightly o’er low steps—and now are
 mounted
“ Where powers are your retainers.”

I believe, my friend, it is a weakness to be disturbed at such a man.—I will name him then no more ; but proceed to tell you all I know farther of Verney, which is merely, that the money he received from Sir Robert, more than what his estate was already mortgaged for (which did not amount to above six thousand pounds) was immediately paid away to satisfy debts
of

of honor; and that he is now raising money on his northern estates, in which he finds some difficulties on account of his wife's settlement. This I hear from such authority, that I cannot doubt the truth of it.—I enquired of my informer, why, if Verney had discharged *such* considerable debts of honor by this last transaction, he had immediate occasion to encumber his Yorkshire estates?—My acquaintance laughed at my calling six thousand pounds a considerable debt, and told me, that if that sum had paid all the demands that were the most immediately pressing on his friend Verney, which he knew they did not, that he would have occasion for at least as much again for the October meeting; and therefore, was trying to raise all he wanted at once.—This was said by no means in the way of a secret, or, as of a design of which Verney had any notion of being ashamed; and the young man who related it to me, and who is one of the set to which he belongs, spoke of it rather as complain-

ing, that it was a confounded shame, that as Verney had married a girl of no fortune, or next to none, he should have been drawn in to make such an unreasonable settlement upon her, as prevented his raising money upon his estates. I am very sorry for Mrs. Verney, but I have long foreseen this.—She will, undoubtedly, have too much firmness of mind, and attention to the interest of her children, to give up her settlement; and it will always afford the family a certain degree of affluence.—You may assure yourself, that were the whole treasures of the East to find their way into the pocket of her husband, he would finally possess no more, for there is nothing but the impossibility of parting with it, that can ever keep any property whatever in his possession.

So much, dear Desmond, for private news from England; as for public news, you probably receive it from those who are better qualified than I am to speak upon it.—You know I am not by any means partial

tial to our present arrangements; yet, as I do not yet see the success of the new modes of government that have been taken up in France, I am not so sanguinely looking out for changes, as you seem to be.—Perhaps this coldness is owing to the observations I made in my short and unfortunate political career.—I saw then such decided selfishness in all parties, so little sincerity, so little real concern for the general good in any, that it impressed me with an universal mistrust of all who profess the science of politics.—Your friend, Montfleuri, however, seems to be sincere.—But for many of those whom the *abbé* termed *messieurs les réformateurs*, they appear to me to be wavering and divided in their councils, and breaking into parties, which occasions me again to entertain some doubts of the permanency of the revolution.—I am certainly a warm friend to its principles.—I only hesitate to believe, that there is steadiness and virtue enough existing among the leaders, to apply those

principles to practice.—I conclude, therefore, as I began, with a quotation from Sterne—and I say with uncle Toby—“I wish it may answer.”

I have no expectation of hearing from you very soon again, as from your last letter, this seems likely to be long in reaching you.—But I am persuaded, that the interest you take in French *politics* on one hand; and, on the other, the interest the fair Josephine takes in your's, will restore to you your gay spirits—and to me my rational friend.

You know I remain, ever,

Most faithfully your's,

E. BETHEL.

L E T-

L E T T E R XII. *

T O M R. B E T H E L.

Hauteville, in Auvergne,
Sept. 14, 1790.

RELUCTANTLY—Oh! how reluctantly, I quited, three days since, the chearful abode of Montfleuri, where every countenance beamed with pleasure and content, for this mournful residence.—A residence, where mortified and discomfited tyranny seems to have taken up its fullen station; and with impotent indignation to colour with its own gloomy hand every furrounding object.—The Comte d'Hauteville is the brother of Montfleuri's mother; and though they are as opposite in their principles, and in their tempers, as light and darkness, Montfleuri has so much respect for his uncle, and so much

* Written before the receipt of the foregoing.

goodness of heart, as to fulfil a promise he required of him, when the latter left Paris, that he would come to him for ten days.—Unable to endure a country, where his power, and as he believes, his consequence is diminished, Monsieur d’Hauteville is preparing to quit France.—His nephew thinks he can dissuade him from this resolution, and reconcile him to the terrible misfortune of being free among freemen, instead of being a petty tyrant among slaves—While the Comte himself entertained hopes that he could convert his nephew, or, at least, lessen his extravagant zeal for that *odious* democratic system he has embraced.—That both will fail in these their expectations, is already very evident.—I must give you, however, a sketch of our journey, and of our reception, to enable you to form some idea of this place, and of its possessor.

We set out in my chaise—neither of us in very gay spirits, though those of Montfleuri are not very easily depressed. But
our

our taking leave of Josephine and Julie, who saw their brother depart with tears, though he is so soon to return ;—the melancholy which he knew hung over this house, and perhaps the heavy atmosphere, which just then prevailed, contributed to make him pensive, and from the same causes that render a Frenchman of his disposition grave, an Englishman naturally feels disposed to hang himself. I had, besides the additional vexation of leaving the house of Montfleuri, without having received, as I expected, a letter from Mrs. Verney during my stay there.

The beginning of our journey, therefore, was dismal enough.—Towards evening, we stopped at the convent where Montfleuri's other sister is a professed nun. I was not permitted to see her ; but he returned in worse spirits than he set out, exclaiming against the odious superstition, that had condemned so amiable a young woman, to so many years of rigid confinement, (for she is a Carmelite) and has

given, he says, to her mind, a tincture of sadness, which he fears it will always retain. When he comes back, it is to be decided, whether or no, she quits her convent.—He has a small property near the little town of Aique-mont, where, as he had some business to settle, we remained all night; and where, I have occasion again to remark, the affection which all who are connected with him feel for Montfleuri.—We did not quit Aique-mont till late the following day. The weather was so unusually warm, that we travelled slowly, and the evening of yesterday before we approached the end of our journey.

The country through which we travelled, was, in many parts, beautifully romantic; but, within about three leagues of the *chateau d'Hauteville*, it opens into one of those extensive plains that are very frequent in Normandy, though not so usual in this part of France.—Over these dead flats, a straight road usually runs for many miles, and the dull uniformity of the prospect

spect is broken only by the rows of pear or apple trees, which are planted upon it in various directions.

A few plantations of vines had here an even less pleasing effect.—In some of them, however, people were at work ; but we no longer heard the chearful songs, or saw the gay faces that we had been accustomed to hear and see in the Lyonois.—At length, Montfleuri pointed out to me, at the extremity of this extensive plain, the woods, which he said surrounded the habitation of his uncle.—The look of even ill managed cultivation soon after ceased ; and over a piece of ground, which was grass, where it was not mole-hills, and from whence all traces of a road were obliterated, we approached to the end of an avenue of beech trees ; they were rather the ruins of trees ; for they had lost the beautiful and graceful forms nature originally gave them, by the frequent application of the ax ; and were, many of them, little better than ragged pollards.

A few straggling trees of other kinds, that had been planted and neglected, were mingled among the rows of beech on either side ; but were, for want of protection, “withering in leafless platoons.”—Not a cottage arose to break the monotony of this long line of disfigured vegetation.—Nothing like a lodge, animated by the cheerful residence of a peasant’s family, marked its termination ; but the paling, which had once divided it from the plain, had either fallen down for want of repairing, or had been carried away by the country people for fuel, in a country where it seemed to be particularly scarce.

Slowly, and through a miserable road, we traversed this melancholy avenue, without seeing, for some time, a human creature.—It seemed to lengthen as we went, and had already lasted above a mile and a quarter, when we observed a figure quickly walking towards us, with a gun on his shoulder, whom I, at first, supposed to be the Count himself. The man seemed, by
his

his step and manner, to be in eager pursuit of something; but I could perceive, by his action, that, on observing an English chaise, he changed the object of his attention, and advanced towards us in a sort of trot, which, from his lank figure and grotesque habit, had a very ridiculous effect.

Under a full dress coat, of a reddish brown, and had once been lined with satin, appeared a waistcoat of gold-flowered brocade, the flaps reaching to his knees, and made, I am persuaded, in the reign of *Louis ci-devant le Grand*.—What appeared of his breeches, under this magnificent *juste au-corps*, was of red velveret, forming a happy contrast to a pair of black worsted stockings.—The little hair which grew on each side of his temples had been compelled, in despite of its reluctance and incapability, to assume the form of curls, but they seemed to have fled, *d'un manière la plus opiniatre du monde*, from his ears; a little hat, like what I recollect having seen in
caraca-

caracature prints, under the name of *Chapeau a le Nevernois*, covered the rest of his head ; but this, as he approached us, was deposited under his arm, notwithstanding the incumbrance of his gun.

“ This is a curious fellow,” said Montfleuri to me, as I approached him, “ he is my uncle’s confidential servant, and more singularly original than his master—A tremendous aristocrate, and miserable at the loss of dignity which he believes he has sustained.”—Then addressing himself to the man, who was by this time very near us, “ Aha ! my old friend, Le Maire,” cried he, “ how are you ? —How is Monsieur d’Hauteville ?”—The old man, not at all satisfied with the manner of this address, stepped back, laid his hand on his breast, and, with a cold and formal bow, replied, “ that he had the honour to assure Monsieur le Marquis de Montfleuri, that Monseigneur le Comte d’Hauteville was as well as, under the present melancholy circumstances of the kingdom,

kingdom, any true Frenchman could be.”
—There was something so very ludicrous in the method and matter of this answer, that Montfleuri did not attempt to resist his violent inclination to laugh—an impoliteness in which I could as little forbear to join.—“ Well, well, Monsieur le Maire,” cried Montfleuri, “ I am glad to hear my uncle is only indisposed from his national concerns—So open the chaise door, my old friend, and I will walk up to the house with this English gentleman, who has been so good as to accompany me.”

Le Maire turned his little fierce black eyes upon me, as Montfleuri announced me to be an Englishman, and, with a look which I could not misinterpret, muttered something as with a jerk he shut the chaise door—“ Ah curse those English, no good ever comes were they are.”

“ Well, but Le Maire,” said Montfleuri, what are you shooting at this time in the evening? what were you so eagerly pursuing

purſuing when we firſt ſaw you ?”—“ Partridges, *Monſieur le Marquis*, partridges ; I ſaw a great number of them feeding round the houſe juſt now, young ones, hardly able to fly, and I was reſolved not one of them ſhould eſcape.”

“ *Mais à quoi bon cela ?*” enquired *Montfleuri*, “ of what uſe will that be, ſince if they are ſo young they are unfit to eat ?”

“ *A quoi bon Monſieur le Marquis ?*” replied the old domeſtic, very indig- nantly ; * “ *Mais c’eſt que je ne veux pas,*

* Why is it, becauſe I would not have remain on the whole eſtate, one ſingle partridge for thoſe beggarly rogues of the village, who have the infamous liberty of killing the birds on my lord’s grounds. I’ll ſpare them the trouble, rascals as they are, of taking game ; and, if I met them—I ſhould do their buſineſs.”

“ But how do their buſineſs ?” “ Why, *Monſieur le Marquis*, perhaps I might fire a few ſhot among thoſe ſcoundrels.”—“ You have, then, a decided call for exhibiting on the lanthorn poſt ?”—“ Be it ſo : I had rather be hanged than live where thoſe fellows are my equals, and have the liberty of hunting.”

qu'il y reste, dans le domaine un seul perdrix pour ces gueux du village; qui ont la liberté infâme de chasser sur les terres de Monseigneur le Comte d'Hauteville— Ah ! je les épargnerai bien, ces marauds, là, la peine de prendre le gibier, & si je les rencontrerai, je ferai bien leur affaire."

" Mais comment leur affaire ?" said Montfleuri.—" Eh ! Monsieur le Marquis," answered Le Maire, " c'est que je pourrais bien, donner quelque coups de fusil à ces coquins."

" Tu as donc une vocation décidé pour la lanterne ?"—" Soit, Monsieur le Marquis, j'aimerais mieux être pendu par ces gens détestables, moi, que de vivre où ils sont mes égaux, & où ils vont à la chasse."

" You see, now," said Montfleuri, turning to me, " the style which even the domestics of the *nobleſſe* assumed towards the peasantry and common people.—This fellow has imbibed all the insolent consequence of those among whom he has lived; and, though roturier himself conceives,

ceives, that he derives from the honor of being the idle valet to a nobleman, a right to despise and trample on the honest man who draws his subsistence from the ground by independent industry." By this time we were arrived at the gate of the *cour d'honneur*, which is furrounded on three sides by the *chateau*.—There had once been a straight walk, leading from the termination of the avenue to the steps of the house, but it was now covered with thistles and nettles; the steps were overgrown with green moss, and when the great door opened to let us in, it seemed an operation to which it was entirely unaccustomed.

Le Maire, however, extremely solicitous for the dignity of his master, had hurried in before us, and sent one servant to wait at this door, and a second to shew us the way to the apartment where Monseigneur was to receive us.—This was in a *salle à compagnie*, on the first floor, where, after passing through three other cold and half-furnished rooms, we, at length, arrived.

rived.—The Count, who is a handsome man, above sixty, received me with cold politeness; his nephew with a sort of fullen kindness: it seemed as if he at once embraced him as a relation, and repulsed him as an enemy.—About half an hour after our arrival, I heard that the Count was to send, the next day, a courier to Clermont, by whom I might dispatch letters to England.—I had this and two or three others to write; and, I thought that it was better to let the Count and his nephew begin their political controversy without the presence of a third person; for these reasons, as soon as supper was over, which was very ill dressed, and served in very dirty plate, I desired to be conducted to my apartment. Having mounted a very broad staircase of brick and wood, and passed through a long corridor, which seemed to lead to a part of the house very remote from that I had left, I was shewn into a sort of state bed-chamber; one of those where comfort had formerly been

been sacrificed to splendour, but which now possessed neither the one or the other : and, on opening the door, I was sensible of that damp, musty smell, which is usually perceived in rooms that have been long unfrequented.

The wainscoting was of cedar, or some other brown wood, finely carved; the hangings of a dull and dark blue Lyon's damask; a high canopy bed of the same, stood at one end of the room, and, at the other, was a very large glass reaching from the ceiling to the floor; but which, by the single candle I had, served only to reflect the deep gloom that every object offered.—A great projecting chimney of blood coloured marble, over which another mirror supported a large carved trophy, representing the arms of the family; a red marble table, and four or five high backed, stuffed chairs, covered with blue velvet, completed the furniture of the room; which, floored as it was with hexagon bricks, composed, altogether, one
of

of the most funereal apartments I ever remember to have been in.

I sat down, however, and wrote my letters; but having done them, I felt no inclination to sleep, and therefore, opening the *croisée*, I leaned upon the iron railing, which, in houses built as this is, forms a clumsy sort of balcony to every window.—The day had been unusually close and sultry, and with the night, the thunder storm, produced by the heated atmosphere, approached.—I now heard it mutter at a distance, and soon after saw, from the south-west, the most vivid lightening I ever remarked, breaking from those majestic and deeply-loaden clouds, which the brightness of the moon above them made very visible.—In a country so level as that is, for many miles round the *chateau* d'Hauteville, the horizon is, of course, great and uninterrupted, and I saw to advantage the progress of the storm; a spectacle I have always had great pleasure in contemplating.

When

When the imagination soars into those regions, where the planets pursue each its destined course, in the immensity of space—every planet, probably, containing creatures adapted by the Almighty, to the residence he has placed them in; and when we reflect, that the smallest of these is of as much consequence in the universe, as this world of our's; how puerile and ridiculous do those pursuits appear in which we are so anxiously busied; and how insignificant the trifles we toil to obtain, or fear to lose. None of all the little cares and troubles of our short and fragile existence, seem worthy of giving us any real concern—and, perhaps, we never truly possess the reason we so arrogantly boast, till we can thus appreciate the real value of the objects around us.

Heaven knows, my dear Bethel, that I am far enough from enjoying this philosophic tranquillity.—I have entrusted you with my waking reflections—Dare I ask your indulgence for the wild wanderings
of

of my mind, when reason resigned her seat entirely to “thick-coming fancies.”

The hurricane had entirely subsided, and the rain-drops fell slowly from the roof, I still continued at the window, for my thoughts were fled to England, and I had only a confused recollection of where I was; till I found myself extremely cold, and turning, saw my candle expiring in the socket. I then recollected, that it was time to go to my bed, and to seek in sleep, relief against the uneasy thoughts that had dwelt upon my mind about Geraldine. On looking, however, towards it, it again seemed so comfortless and gloomy, that I fancied it damp; and though no man possesses a constitution more fortified against such accidents, or cares less about them, I had no inclination to undress myself; or, though I was weary, to sleep, I wished for a book, but I happened, contrary to my usual custom, not to have one in the small portmanteau I had brought
from

from Montfleuri; and having nothing to divert my attention from the cold gloom that surrounded me, I became tired of hearing the dull murmurs of the sinking wind howl along the corridor—and I, at length, determined to try to sleep.

Still, however, the notion of the dampness of the bed deterring me from entering it, I took only my coat off, and wrapping myself in a flannel powdering gown, I threw myself on the embroidered counterpane, and soon after sunk into forgetfulness. I know you will say I am as weakly superstitious as a boarding-school miss, or as “the wisest aunt telling the saddest tale” to a circle of tired and impatient auditors.—I am conscious of all this, yet I cannot help relating the strange phantoms that haunted my imagination.

I believed myself at the same window as where I stood to observe the storm; and, that in the Count’s garden, immediately beneath it, I saw Geraldine exposed to all its fury.—Her husband seemed at first to

be with her, but he disappeared, I know not how, and she was left exposed to the fury of the contending elements, which seemed to terrify her less on her own account, than on that of three children, whom she clasped to her bosom, in all the agonies of maternal apprehension, and endeavoured to shelter from the encreasing fury of the tempest.—I hastened, I flew, with that velocity we possess only in dreams, to her assistance: I pressed her eagerly in my arms—I wrapt them round her children—I thought she faintly thanked me; told me, that for herself, my care was useless, but that it might protect them.—She was as cold as marble, and I recollect having remarked, that she resembled a beautiful statue of Niobe, done by an Italian sculptor, which I had admired at Lyons.

While I was entreating her to accept of my protection, and to go into the house, I suddenly, by one of those incongruities so usual in sleep, fancied I saw her ex-

tended, pale, and apparently dying on the bed, which I had myself objected to go into, with the least of the children, a very young infant dead in her arms.—Distracted at such a sight, I seized her hand—I implored her to speak to me—She opened languidly those lovely eyes, which I have so often gazed on with transport—they were glazed and heavy—yet, I thought, they expressed tenderness and pity for me—while, in a low, tremulous voice—she bade me adieu!—adieu, for ever!

I now shrieked in frantic terror—I tried to recall her to life by my wild exclamations—I would have warmed, in my bosom, the cold hand I held, when she gently drew it from me, and pointing to her two children, who I now saw standing by the side of the bed, clinging to a young woman, who was, I fancied, Fanny Waverly, she said, in a yet lower and more mournful tone—“ Desmond!—if you ever truly loved me, it is there you must shew your affection.”—I then saw the last breath
tremble

tremble on those lovely lips—it was gone—Geraldine was lost for ever!—And, in an agony of despair, such as, thank Heaven, I never was conscious of waking; I threw myself on the ground.—The violence of this ideal emotion restored me to myself.—I awoke—my face bathed in tears, and in such confusion of spirits, that it was long before I could recall myself to reason, and to a clear conviction, that all this was only a dream. So strong was the impression, that I dared not hazard feeling it again by sleeping.—I therefore put on my great coat, and as the moon now shone in unclouded radiance, I went down into the garden, and wandered among the *bosquets* and *treillage* that make its formal ornaments.—Still the figure of Geraldine pursued me, such as I had seen her in this distressing vision—Still I heard her voice bidding me an eternal adieu!—I would have given the world to have had some human being to have spoken to, that these imaginary sounds of plaintive sorrow might have vibrated in my ears no longer, but I was

ashamed of awakening Montfleuri, had I known where to have found him—And my servant Warley, I had left at Montfleuri, to bring my letters after me.

I continued, therefore, to traverse this melancholy garden—Sometimes resolving to conquer my weakness, and return to my bed, and then shrinking for the apprehensions of being again liable to the terror I had just experienced. At length, I heard the clock of the church strike three—I followed the sound for two or three hundred paces, through a cut walk that led from the garden towards it, and entering the church-yard, which is the *cimetière* of a large village, I was again struck with a circumstance that had before appeared particularly dismal. I mean, that there are in France no marks of graves, as in England,

“Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap.”

Here all is level—and forgetfulness seems

to have laid her cold oblivious hand on all who rest within these enclosures.

No object appears in the mournful spot I was now contemplating, but a cross, on which a dead Christ painted, and representing life, as closely as possible, was suspended; the moon-beams falling directly on this, added to the dreary horrors of the scene.—I stood a few moments looking on it, and then was roused from my mournful reverie by the sound of human voices, and of horses feet.—I listened, and found these sounds came from the farm-yard, which was only two or three hundred paces before me.—Hither I gladly found my way, and saw the vine-dressers, and people employed in the making wine, preparing for their work, and going to gather the grapes while the dew was yet on them. Rejoiced to find somebody to speak to, I entered into conversation with them, and for a moment dissipated my ideas—I followed them to the vineyard, assisted in their labours, and was equally astonished and pleased to hear, how

rationally these unenlightened men considered the blessing of their new-born liberty, and with what manly firmness determine to preserve it.

There was among them a Breton, who appeared to have more acuteness and knowledge than the rest; with him, I shall take an opportunity of having farther discourse.

It is now one o'clock at noon.—I have had an hour's conversation with Montfleuri—I have paid my morning compliments to the Count—I have been amused with the ridiculous anger of Le Maire, whom Montfleuri has been provoking to display it, on the subject of the abolished titles—Yet, even after all this, the impression I received in my sleep is not dissipated—Yet, I am certainly not superstitious.—I have, assuredly, no faith in dreams, which are, I know, but

“ The children of an idle brain,

“ Begot of nothing but vain phantasy,

“ And more inconstant than the vagrant winds.”*

* Shakespeare. .

I shall

I shall hear from England, perhaps, to-morrow, or Friday, and then be able to laugh at my weakness, as much as you have probably done in reading this. I hear the Count's courier is ready to set out for Clermont. I must, therefore, hastily bid you, dear Bethel, adieu !

LIONEL DESMOND.

* L E T T E R X I I .

T O M R. B E T H E L .

Hauteville in Auvergne, Sept. 30, 1790.

MONTFLEURI came into my room yesterday morning with letters in his hand, which he had just received from his own house.—I asked eagerly for mine, but there were none, and my servant yet remains waiting for them.—I expressed, perhaps too forcibly, what I felt—impatience and disappointment; when Montfleuri, as soon as these emotions had a little subsided, asked me gaily, “whether I had many near and dear relations in England, for whose health I was so extremely solicitous as to injure my own by my anxiety?”—I replied, “that though I had very few relations, and with those few seldom corresponded, yet, that I had friends to whom I was warmly attached.”

’ * Written before the receipt of Bethel’s last letter.

“ And

—“ And some lovely and fond woman also, I fancy,” interrupted he ; “ for, my dear Desmond, the friendship, however great, that subsists between persons of the same sex, creates not these violent anxieties. —Ah ! my good friend, I fancy you are a very fortunate fellow—As to my two sisters, they seem, by their letters, to be quite enchanted with you ; and Josephine (whose tears, indeed, at our parting, I did not before attribute *all* to my own account) declares in this letter, that if I do not soon return with my English friend, she and Julie must rejoin us here, notwithstanding their dislike to this melancholy place ; for, that since we have left Montfleuri, it is become so extremely *triste*, that they are half dead with lassitude and *ennui*. You remember, I dare say, hearing fine sentimental speeches from Josephine about the charms of solitude and the beauties of nature.—Now nature was never more beautiful than it is at this moment in the Lyonois, yet is my gentle Josephine most

marvellously discontent. Desmond, do tell me how you manage to bewitch the women in this manner?"

I was neither gay enough to enjoy this raillery, or coxcomb enough to believe that Madame de Boisbelle regretted me at Montfleuri.—Indeed, I rather felt hurt at her brother's speaking of her thus lightly; but with him this vivacity is constitutional.—He has besides, from education, habit, and principles, much freer notions than I have about women.—He again enquired of me of what nature was my English attachment—a question I declined answering; for the name of Geraldine is not to be prophaned by his suspicions, or even his conjectures.—Were I to say that my passion for her is as pure and holy as that of a fond brother for a lovely and amiable sister, which I am *almost* sure it is, he would turn my Platonism into ridicule; or, if he could be persuaded to believe that such a passion exists, he would think that she was a prude, and that I am an idiot;
and

and to this, though I can forgive it, because he does not know Geraldine, I will not expose myself.

I heartily wish the time fixed for our stay here was expired—I am weary of the place—The frigid magnificence in which we live is very dull, and the perpetual arguments between the Count and his Nephew, are sometimes, at least, distressing.—The former, with that haughty obstinacy that endeavours to set itself above the reason it cannot combat, defends, with asperity and anger, those prejudices, in obedience to which he is about to quit his country—Though could he determine to throw them off, he might undoubtedly continue at home, as much respected, and more beloved than ever he was in the meridian of his power.

The dialogues, which he is fond of holding with Montfleuri, have not unfrequently been carried on with so much warmth on his side, as to alarm me, lest they should produce an open rupture ;

for what the old Count wants in soundness of argument, he makes up in heat and declamation.—His nephew, however, has so much good temper, and such an habitual respect for him, that he never suffers himself to be too much ruffled; and d’Hauteville, after the most violent of these contentions, is under the necessity of recollecting, that it is on his nephew he must depend for the care of his pecuniary concerns (a matter to which he is by no means indifferent) when he goes into the voluntary exile to which he chuses to condemn himself. He also recollects, that he owes to Montfleuri a considerable sum of money, part of his mother’s fortune; which, together with the arrear of interest he has always evaded paying by the chicanery of the old laws; and, he now fears, that when equal justice is established, this claim may be revived and enforced by Montfleuri.—Thus it is rather interest than affinity that prevents his breaking with his nephew; and that compels him, with
averted

averted and reluctant ears, to hear those truths which Montfleuri speaks to him, with the same coolness, and as much divested of considerations of personal interest, as his nephew would speak before a conclave of cardinals, or, if it could be collected, of emperors.

To-day, after dinner, Montfleuri happened to be absent, and the Count taking advantage of it, began to talk to me, whom he wishes to win over to his party, on the subject nearest his heart—the abolition of all titular distinctions in France.—He went back to the earliest records of the kingdom to prove what I never doubted—the antiquity of titles, as if that were an irrefragable proof of their utility.—“ My God, Sir!” cried he, “ is it possible—that you—that you—who are, without doubt, yourself of noble blood”—“ Pardon me, Sir, said I, for interrupting you, but if that be of any weight in the argument you are going to use, it is necessary to tell you, your supposition is erroneous—I am not

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noble.

noble.—My ancestors, so far as I ever traced them, which is indeed a very little way, were never above the rank of plain country gentlemen; and, I am afraid, towards the middle of the last century, lose even that dignity in a miller and a farmer.”—“ Well, Sir,” continued the Count, in whose esteem I had gained nothing by this humble disclosure of my origin.—“ Well, Sir, however that may have been—you are now, I understand, from the Marquis, my nephew, a man of large fortune and liberal education—and therefore, in your own country, where *noblesse* is not so much insisted upon, you have, undoubtedly, mixed much with men of high birth, and eminent consideration.”—“ Really, Sir, you do me an honor in that supposition, to which I am not very well entitled. With us, it is true, that a considerable fortune is a passport to such society; and had I found any satisfaction in enlisting myself under the banners of either of those parties, who are always
contending

contending for the good of old England, I might have been admitted among the old and middle aged, who are busied in arranging the affairs of the public; or among the young, who are yet more busy in disarranging their own. But having no taste for the society of either the one or the other, I can boast of only one titled friend in my own country; and he is a man whom I love and honor for the virtues of his heart, not for the splendor of his situation.—Possessing an illustrious name and a noble fortune, he has a dignity of mind, and a sensibility of heart, which those advantages not unfrequently destroy. Could we, among our numerous nobility, boast of many such men, their conduct would be a stronger argument in favor of the advantages of a powerful aristocracy, than the most dazzling shew of a birth-day exhibition, or the most plausible indication of titular distinctions that we have ever yet heard.—There may, for ought I know, be others equally respectable for their private virtues,

but

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but they have not fallen within my observation; and judging, therefore, of the greater part of them through the medium of public report, I have felt no wish to approach them nearer." "However you may think of individuals, Sir," said the Count, "you surely are not so blinded, so infatuated, by the doctrines that have obtained most unhappily for this country, as not to feel the necessity that this order of men should exist.—You must know, that the wisdom of our ancient kings created this distinction, that is to say, they thought it expedient to raise the brave and valiant above the common level of mankind, by giving them badges and titles of honor, in order to mark and perpetuate their glorious deeds, and stimulate, to emulation, their illustrious posterity—now—if these well-earned rewards are taken from their descendants—if these sacred distinctions be annihilated, and the names of heroes past, be erased from the records of mankind—I assert, that there is an end, not only of justice,

justice, but of emulation, subordination—all that gives safety to property, or grace to society—and the world will become a chaos of confusion and outrage.—What!—shall a man of trade, a negociant, an upstart dealer in wine, or wood, or sugar, or cloth, approach one in whose veins, perhaps, the blood of our Lusignans and Tancreds circulates.—The same blood which, in the defence of our holy religion, was shed in Palestine.—I say, shall a mushroom, a fungus, approach these illustrious descendants of honored ancestors, and say, “Behold, Oh! man of high descent, I am thy equal, my country declares it!”

Indignation here arrested the eloquence it had produced, and gave me an opportunity of saying, “My dear Sir, the united voices of common sense, nature, and reason, declared all this long ago, though it is only now you are compelled to hear them. As to the degradation of *Messieurs*, the present descendants of your Lusignans
and

and Tancreds, if it be a degradation to be accounted only men, I really am much concerned for them; but for the ill effects it otherwise produces, inasmuch as such motives fail as might excite them to equal these their great progenitors, I cannot understand that there is in that respect much to regret.—The days of chivalry will never, I apprehend, return; the ravings of a fanatic monk will never again prevail on the French to make a crusade.—Nay, added I, smiling, there seems but little probability that they will soon be called upon to take arms, in a cause which has in later times appeared of greater moment—I mean, rescuing what one of your writers calls *le vain bonheur du pavillon**, from the arrogant superiority of us presumptuous islanders. The real value of both these objects, for which so much blood has been wasted, seems to be better understood, the real inte-

* The vain honor of the flag, which, till within a few years, the English have always insisted on having struck to them in the Narrow Seas.

rest of humanity to appear in its proper light. Since, therefore, we no longer have occasion to follow the example of those heroes who have bled for either—Why contemplate them with such blind reverence? I suppose, Sir, you will not say, that the frantic expeditions to the Holy Land, preached by Peter the Hermit, answered any other purpose than to depopulate and impoverish your country and mine. Nor will you maintain, that either France or England have gained any thing but taxes and poverty by the continual wars with which we have been harassing each other, through a succession of ages. Surely then it is time to recall our imaginations from these wild dreams of fanaticism and heroism—Time to remove the gorgeous trappings, with which we have dressed up folly, that we might fancy it glory.—The tinsel ornaments we have borrowed as the livery of this phantom, are become tarnished and contemptible—Let us not regret then, that the hand of sober reason tears off these poor remaining shreds, with
which

which virtue *disdains* to attempt encrease its genuine lustre; with which selfishness and folly *must fail* to hide their real conformity.—Have patience with me yet a moment, added I—have patience with me yet a moment—while I ask—whether you really think, that a dealer in wine, or wood, in sugar, or cloth, is not endued with the same faculties and feelings as the descendant of Charlemagne; and whether the accidental advantage of being able to produce a long pedigree (which, notwithstanding the infinite virtue ascribed to nobles of antiquity, is, I fear, often very doubtful) ought to give to the noble who possesses it, a right to consider every low rank of men as being of an inferior and subordinate species”—

“ So, Sir”—angrily burst forth the Count—“ So, Sir!—I must, from all this conclude, that you consider your footman upon an equality with yourself.—Why then is he your footman*?”

* This argument has been called unanswerable

“ Because—though my footman is certainly so far upon an equality with me, as he is a man, and a free-man; there must be distinction in local circumstances; though they neither render me noble, or me too low—I happen to be born heir to considerable estates; it is his chance to be the son of a labourer, living on those estates.—I have occasion for his services, he has occasion for the money by which I purchase them: in this compact we are equal so far as we are free.—I, with my property, which is money, buy his property, which is time, so long as he is willing to sell it.—I hope and believe my footman feels himself to be my fellow-man; but I have not, therefore, any apprehension that instead of waiting behind my chair, he will sit down in the next.—He was born poor—but he is not angry that I am rich—so long as my riches are a benefit and not an oppression to him.—He knows that he never can be in *my* situation, but he knows also that I can amend
his.

his.—If, however, instead of paying him for his services, I were able to say to him, as *has* been done by the higher classes throughout Europe, and is still in too many parts of it—“you are my vassal—you were born upon my estate—you are my property—and you must come to work, fight, die for me, on whatever conditions I please to impose ;—my servant, who would very naturally perceive no appeal against such tyrannical injustice, but to bodily prowess would, as he is probably the most athletic of the two, discover that so far from being compelled to stand on such terms behind my chair, he was well able either to place himself in the next, or to turn me out of mine.—‘ * Ceux qui disent

* Those who say that all men are equal, say that which is perfectly true ; if they mean that all men have an equal right to personal and mental liberty ; to their respective properties ; and to the protection of the laws : but they would be as certainly wrong in believing that men ought to be equal in trusts, in employments, since nature has not made them equal in their talents.”

que

que tous les hommes sont égaux,' says Voltaire—'Ceux qui disent que tous les hommes sont égaux, disent la plus grande vérité, s'ils entendent que tous les hommes ont un droit égal à la liberté, à la propriété de leurs biens, & à la protection des loix.—Ils se tromperaient beaucoup, s'ils croyaient que les hommes, doivent être égaux par les emplois, puisqu'ils ne le sont pas par leurs talens."

"Voltaire!" impatiently exclaimed the Count, "why always Voltaire?—one is perfectly stunned with the false wit and insidious misrepresentations of that atheistical scribbler."

Against the defender of the family of Calas; the protector of the Sirvens; the benefactor of all mankind, whom he pitied, served, and laughed at; the Count now most furiously declaimed, in a long and angry speech, which, as it possessed neither truth or argument, I have forgot.—Towards the close of it, however, he had worked himself into such a state of irri-

tation, that he seemed on the point of forgetting that on which he so highly values himself—*Les manières de la vieille cour*.

The entrance of a man of the church, whose diminished revenues had yet had no effect, either in reducing his figure, or subduing his arrogance, made a momentary diversion in my favour.

But the Count was now heated by his subject; and, being reinforced with so able an auxillary, he returned to the charge.—He related the subject of our controversy to his friend, who, while he spoke, surveyed me with such looks, as one of the holy brotherhood of the Inquisition may be supposed to throw on the unhappy culprit whom he is about to condemn to the flames on the next *auto de fé*.—In a manner peculiar, I trust, to *la veille cour ecclésiastique*, he gave me to understand, that he considered me as an ignorant atheistical boy; and, that his abhorrence of my principles was equalled only by his contempt for my country and myself.—“Voltaire,”
said

said he, “ Voltaire, Monsieur L’Anglois, is a wretch with whose name I fully not my mind; a monster whose pernicious writings have overturned the religion and the government of his country.” The manner in which this was said, brought to my mind an expression which Voltaire puts himself into the mouth of such a character. —“ Ah! nous ferions les maîtres du monde, sans ces coquins de gens d’esprit.”* I continued to listen to the discourse which the Count now resumed; the purport of which was to convince me, that the decree of the nineteenth of May, was subversive of all order, and ruinous alike to the dignity and happiness of a state.— At length he stopped to recover his breath, and gave me an opportunity of saying, “ if, Sir, I might be once more permitted to quote so obnoxious an author † as him of whom we have just been speaking, I

* “ Ah! we should be masters of the world, were it not for those rascally wits.”

† Voltaire.

should say, that “ Le nom est indifférent ; il n’y a que le pouvoir qui ne le soit pas.*” —If the *name* of *noblesse* was so connected with the *power* of oppression, that they could not be divided, the nation had a right to take away both ; if otherwise, it might, perhaps, have been politic to have divided them, and have left to the French patricians, these *sounds* on which they seem to feel that their consequence depends ; together with the invaluable privileges of having certain symbols painted on their coaches, or woven on their furniture ; and of dressing their domestics in one way rather than in another.—A great people who had every thing on which its freedom and its prosperity depended to consider, must surely have seen such objects as these with so much indifference, that had they not been evidently obnoxious to the spirit of reform, they would have left them to the persons who so highly value them ; persons who resolve to quit their

* The name is immaterial ; it is the power only that is of consequence.

country because they are no longer to be enjoyed in it.—The framers of the new constitution, had they not been well convinced of the inefficacy of mere *palliation*, would not, certainly, by destroying these distinctions (matters in themselves quite inconsequential) have raised against the fabric they were planning, the unextinguishable rage and hatred of a great body of men; but would have left them in quiet possession of these baubles so necessary to their happiness.”

“ Hold, Sir,” cried the Count, whose impatience could no longer be restrained —“ Hold, Sir, and do not speak thus contemptuously I entreat you, of an advantage which it is very truly said, no man undervalues who is possessed of it.—You, Sir, have owned that your family is *roturier*—How then, and at your time of life, when the real value of objects cannot have been taught you by experience; how then can *you* pretend to judge of that which is appreciated by the wisdom of ages,

and has been held up as the reward of heroic virtues.—Baubles!—Is it thus you term the name a man derives from his illustrious ancestors—Bauble!—are the honors handed down to me, from the first d’Hauteville, who lived under *Louis le Gros*, the sixth in descent from Charlemagne, to be thus contumaciously described by the upstart politics of modern reformers.”

I was really concerned to see the poor man so violently agitated, and replied, “ My dear Sir—I allow much to the pride derived from ancestry—Where the dignity of an house has been supported, as I doubt not, but that *you* have supported yours; but let me on the other side say, that there are but too many who certainly inherit not, with their names, the virtues of their progenitors. You recollect a maxim of Rochefaucault’s on this subject, which, as I remember to have heard, that he is a favourite author of your’s, you will allow me to bring forward in support of my argument—“ *Les grands noms abaissent au lieu d’élever,*

..d'élever, ceux qui ne savent pas les soutenir*." Besides, how many are there, both in your country and mine, who are called noble, who cannot, in fact, refer to the examples of a long line of ancestry, to animate them, by example, to dignified conduct.—How very many, who owe to money, and not *hereditary merit*, the right they assume to look down on the rest of the world. It is true, that for the most part, that world repays their contempt; and it is from the vulgar only, who venerate a new coronet, which is generally "*twice as big as an old one*"—that they receive even the "*knee homage*, this valued appendage gives them. "Les Rois font des hommes comme des pieces de monnoie; ils les font valoir ce qu'ils veulent, & l'on est forcé de les recevoir, selon leurs cours & non pas selon leur véritable prix†."

"Let

* "Great names degrade, instead of raising, those who know not how to support them."—Maxime 94, de Rochefaucault.

† Kings give value to men as they do to coin; they mark them with what stamp they please; and

“ Let such men, then,” said Monsieur d’Hauteville, “ let such be erased, with all my heart, from the catalogue of noble names.—Indeed, it is well known, that *we* never considered such as belonging to our order.—I argue not about them—but for those, whose blood gives them pretensions to different treatment.—Ah! Monsieur Desmond, if it were possible—but it is not—for you to understand my feelings, you would comprehend, how utterly impossible it is for me, at my time of life, to continue in this lost and debased country, to drag on an existence, from which every thing valuable is gone, and which is consequently exposed to indignity and scorn—Would they not erase my arms? change my description? tear down the trophies of my house?”—These ideas seemed so deeply to affect the Count, that his respiration again became affected; his

the world receives them according to this imaginary estimate, and not according to their real value.—
Rochefaucault, Maxime 158.

eyes appeared to be starting from his head ; and he assumed so much the look of a man on the point of becoming insane, that I thought it more than time to conclude a conversation, that I should not have continued so long, had he not seemed to desire it.

With inveterate prejudice, thus fondly nursed from early youth, it were hopeless to contend—In the mind of Monsieur d’Hauteville, this notion of family consequence is so interwoven, so associated with all his ideas, that, as the ivy coeval with the tree, at length, destroys its vital principle, this sentiment now predominates to the extinction of reason itself—“ These prejudices,” says an eminent living writer*, “ arise from what are commonly called false views of things, or improper associations of ideas, which, in the extreme, become delirium, or madness ; and is conspicuous to every person, except to him, who

* Priestley’s Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever:

actually labours under this disorder of mind."

I withdrew, therefore, as soon as I could, leaving Monsieur d'Hauteville with his friend; who, I am sure, had his looks possessed the power imputed to those of the Basilisk, would then have concluded my adventures.—As I passed through the last anti-room, and turned my eyes on the drawing of a great *genealogical* tree, which covers one side of it, I could not help philosophizing on the infinite variety of the modes of thinking among mankind—The difference between my consideration of such an object, and that bestowed on it by Monsieur d'Hauteville, struck me forcibly. Had I such a yellow scroll, though it described my descent from Adam or Noah, from a knight of the flaming sabre, or a king of the West Saxons—I should probably, on the first occasion that such a material was wanted, cut it into angular slips, and write directions on the back of these parchment shreds, for the pheasants and hares

hares that I fend to my friends—While Monseigneur le Comte d'Hauteville is going to leave his native country, because the visionary honor he derives from this record, are not ostensibly allowed him in it—Exclaiming, poor man! to the National Assembly, “ Oh! ye have—

“ From my own windows torn my household coat ;
 “ Raz'd out my impress ; leaving me no sign
 “ To shew the world I am a gentleman! * ”

I here conclude this long letter, though I shall not seal it to night, because I have here much time on my hands, and cannot employ it better than in writing to you ; and because, I hope to dispatch by the same conveyance that takes this, an answer to those which I hope to have from you—for surely, my servant will be here to-morrow or Tuesday, with the letters that I have so long expected to be directed to the

* Shakespeare's Richard the Second.

chateau de Montfleuri, from England; and which I now await, with hourly and increasing impatience.

Vale—Vale et me ama,

L. DESMOND.

L E T.

L E T T E R XIII. *

T O M R. B E T H E L.

Hauteville, in Auvergne,
Oct. 2, 1790.

DID I not name to you a Breton, who had something in his air and manner unlike others of the peasantry?—Whenever I have observed him, he seemed to be the amusement of his fellow labourers; there was an odd quaint kind of pleasantry about him; and I wished to enter into conversation with him, which I had yesterday evening an opportunity of doing.—“ You are not of this part of France, my friend?” said I—“ No, Monsieur—I am a Breton—And now, would return into my own country again, but that, in a fit of impatience, at the excessive impositions I laboured

* Written before the receipt of Bethel's last letter.

under, I sold my little property about four years ago, and now must continue to “*courir le monde, & de vivre comme il plaroit à Dieu*”—Sterne has, I think, translated that to be upon nothing. My acquaintance did not appear to be fond of such *meagre* diet. “But, pray,” said I, “explain to me, what particular oppressions you had to complain of, that drove you to so desperate, and as it has happened so ill-timed a resolution.”

“I believe,” replied he, “that I am naturally of a temper a little impatient; and it was not much qualified by making a campaign or two against the English; the first was in a ship of war, fitted out at St. Malo’s—or, in other words, Monsieur, a privateer; for though I was bred a sailor, and loved fighting well enough, I was refused even as *Ensigne de vaisseau**, on board a king’s ship, *because I was not a gentleman*—My father, however, had a pretty little estate,

* Answering, I believe, to our midshipmen.

which he inherited from his great, great grandfather—But he had an elder son, and I was to scramble through the world as well as I could—They wanted, indeed, to make me a monk; but I had a mortal aversion to that *métier**, and thought it better to run the risque of getting my head taken off by a cannon ball, than to shave it—My first debut was not very fortunate—We fell in with an English frigate, with whom, though it was hopeless enough to contend, we exchanged a few shot, for the honor of our country; and one of those we were favored with in return, tore off the flesh from my right leg, without breaking the bone—The wound was bad enough, but the English surgeon sewed it up, and before we landed, I was so well as to be sent with the rest of our crew to the prison at Winchester—I had heard a great deal of the humanity of the English to their prisoners, and supposed I might bear my fate

* Trade—profession.

without much murmuring ; but we were not treated the better for belonging to a privateer.—The prison was over-crowded, and very unhealthy—The provisions, I believe, might be liberally allowed by your government, but they were to pass through the hands of so many people, every one of which had their advantage out of them, that, before they were distributed in the prison, there was but little reason to boast of the generosity of your countrymen. To be sure, the wisdom and humanity of war is very remarkable in a scene like this, where one nation shuts up five or six thousand of the subjects of another, to be fed by contract while they live ; and when they die, which two-thirds of the number seldom fail to do—to be buried by contract—Yes!—out of nine-and-twenty of us poor devils, who were taken in our little privateer, fourteen died within three weeks ; among whom, was a relation of mine, a gallant fellow, who had been in the former wars with the English, and
stood

stood the hazards of many a bloody day—He was an old man, but had a constitution so enured to hardships, and the changes of climate, that he seemed likely to see many more—A vile fever that lurked in the prison seized him—My hammock (for we were flung in hammocks, one above another, in those great, miserable rooms, which compose, what they say is, an unfinished palace) was hung above his, and when he found himself dying, he called to me to come to him—“ ’Tis all over with me, my friend,” said he—“ *N’importe* one must die at some time or other, but I should have liked it better by a cannon ball—Nothing, however, vexes me more in this business, than that I have been the means of bringing you hither to die in this hole—(for, in fact, it was by his advice, I had entered on board the privateer) However, it may be, you will out-live this confounded place, and have another touch at these damned English.” National hatred, that strange and ridiculous prejudice
in

in which my poor old friend had lived, was the last sensation he felt in death—He died quietly enough, in a few moments afterwards, and the next day I saw him tied up between two boards, by way of the coffin, which was to be provided by contract; and deposited in the *fossé* that surrounded our prison, in a grave, dug by contract, and of course very shallow, in which he was covered with about an inch of mold, which was by contract also, put over him, and seven other prisoners, who died at the same time!—My youth, and a great flow of animal spirits, carried me through this wretched scene—And a young officer, who was a native of the same part of Brittany, and who was a prisoner on parole, at a neighbouring town, procured leave to visit the prison at Winchester, and enquired me out—He gave me, though he could command very little money himself, all he had about him, to assist me in procuring food, and promised to try if he could obtain for me my parole, as he
knew

knew my parents, and was concerned for my situation—But his intentions, in my favor, were soon frustrated, for, on the appearance of the combined fleets in the Channel, the French officers, who were thought too near the coast, were ordered away to Northampton, while, very soon afterwards, a number of Spaniards, who had among them a fever of a most malignant sort, were sent to the prison already over-crowded, and death began to make redoubled havock among its wretched inhabitants—Of so dire a nature was the disease thus imported, that while the bodies that were thrown over-board from the Spanish fleet, and driven down by the tide on the coasts of Cornwall and Devonshire, carried its fatal influence into those countries, the prisoners, who were sent up from Plymouth, disseminated destruction in their route, and among all who approached them; thus becoming the instruments of greater mischief, than the sword and the bayonet could have executed.

Not

Not only the miserable prisoners of war, who were now a mixture of French, Spanish, and Dutch perished by dozens every day; but the foldiers who guarded them, the attendants of the prifon, the physical men who were fent to adminifter medicines, and foon afterwards, the inhabitants of the town, and even thofe of the neighbouring country began to fuffer—Then it was that your government perceiving this *bleffing of war* likely to extend itfelf rather too far, thought proper to give that attention to it, which the calamities of the prifoners would never have excited. A phyfician was fent down by Parliament, to examine into the caufes of this fcourge; and in confequence of the impoffibility of ftopping it while fuch numbers were croud-ed together, the greater part of the French, whom ficknefs had fpared, were difmiffed, and I, among others, returned to my own country. I, foon after, not difcouraged by what had befallen me, entered on board another privateer, which had the good fortune

fortune to capture two West-India ships, richly laden, and to bring them safely into l'Orient, where we disposed of their cargoes; and my share was so considerable, that I determined to quit the sea, and return to my friends—When, in pursuance of this resolution, I arrived at home, I found my father and elder brother had died during my absence; and I took possession of the little estate to which I thus became heir, and began to think myself a person of some consequence. In commencing country gentleman, I sat myself down to reckon all the advantages of my situation—An extensive tract of waste land lay on one side of my little domain—On the other, a forest—My fields abounded with game—a river ran through them, on which I depended for a supply of fish; and I determined to make a little warren, and to build a dove-cote. I had undergone hardships enough to give me a perfect relish for the good things now within my reach; and I resolved most piously to enjoy them

—But

—But I was soon disturbed in this agreeable reverie—I took the liberty of firing one morning at a covey of partridges, that were feeding in my corn; and having the same day caught a brace of trout, I was sitting down to regale myself on these dainties, when I received the following notice from the neighbouring *seigneur*, with whom I was not at all aware that I had any thing to do.

“ The most high and most powerful *seigneur*, Monseigneur Raoul-Phillippe-Joseph-Alexandre-Cæsar Erispoé, Baron de Kermanfroi, signifies to Louis-John de Merville, that he the said *seigneur* is in quality of Lord Paramount, is to all intents and purposes invested with the sole right and property of the river running through his fief, together with all the fish therein; the rushes, reeds, and willows that grow in or near the said river; all trees and plants that the said river waters; and all the islands and aits within it—Of all and every one of which the high and mighty

mighty lord, Raoul-Phillippe-Joseph-Alexander-Cæsar Erispoé, Baron de Kermanfroi, is absolute and only proprietor—Also, of all the birds of whatsoever nature or species, that have, shall, or may, at any time fly on, or across, or upon, the said *fief* or *seigneurie*—And all the beasts of chase, of whatsoever description, that have, shall, or may be found upon it.”—In short, Sir, it concluded with informing me, the said Louis-Jean, that if I, at any time, dared to fish in the river, or to shoot a bird upon the said *fief*, of which it seems my little farm unluckily made part, I should be delivered into the hands of justice, and dealt with according to the utmost rigor of the offended laws. To be sure, I could not help enquiring within myself, how it happened, that I had no right to the game thus fed in my fields, nor the fish that swam in the river? and how it was, that heaven, in creating these animals, had been at work only for the great *seigneurs*! —What! is there nothing, said I, but insects

sects and reptiles, over which man, not born noble, may exercise dominion?—From the wren to the eagle; from the rabbit to the wild-boar; from the gudgeon to the pike—all, all, it seems, are the property of the great. 'Twas hard to imagine where the power originated, that thus deprived all other men of their rights, to give to those nobles the empire of the elements, and the dominion over animated nature!—However, I reflected, but I did not resist; and since I could no longer bring myself home a dinner with my gun, I thought to console myself, as well as I could, with the produce of my farm-yard; and I constructed a small enclosed pigeon-house, from whence, without any offence to my noble neighbour, I hoped to derive some supply for my table—But, alas! the comfortable and retired state of my pigeons attracted the aristocratic envy of those of the same species, who inhabited the spacious manorial dove-cote of Monseigneur; and they were so very unreasonable as to cover,

in

in immense flocks, not only my fields of corn, where they committed infinite depredations, but to surround my farm-yard, and monopolize the food with which I supplied my own little collection, in their enclosures. As if they were instinctively assured of the protection they enjoyed as belonging to the *seigneur* Raoul-Philippe-Joseph-Alexander-Cæsar Erispoé, Baron de Kermanfroi; my menaces, and the shouts of my servants, were totally disregarded; till, at length, I yielded too hastily to my indignation, and threw a stone at a flight of them, with so much effect, that I broke the leg of one of these pigeons; the consequence of which was, that in half an hour, four of the *gardes de chasse** of Monseigneur appeared, and summoned me to declare, if I was not aware, that the wounded bird which they produced in evidence against me, was the property of the said *seigneur*; and without giving

* Game-keepers.

me time either to acknowledge my crime, or apologize for it, they shot, by way of retaliation, the tame pigeons in my enclosures, and carried me away to the *chateau* of the most high and puissant *seigneur* Raoul-Philippe-Joseph-Alexandre-Cæsar Erispoé, Baron de Kermanfroï, to answer for the assault I had thus committed on the person of one of his pigeons—There I was interrogated by the Fiscal, who was making out a *proces verbal*; and reproved severely for not knowing or attending to the fact, so universally acknowledged by the laws of Britany, that pigeons and rabbits were creatures peculiarly dedicated to the service of the nobles; and that for a vassal, as I was, to injure one of them, was an unpardonable offence against the rights of my lord, who might inflict any punishment he pleased for my transgression—That indeed, the laws of Beauvoisis pronounced, that such an offence was to be punished with death; but that the milder laws of Britany condemned the offender only to corporal punishment,

nishment, at the mercy of the lord—In short, Sir, I got off this time by paying a heavy fine to Monseigneur Raoul Philippe-Joseph-Alexander-Cæsar Erispoé, Baron de Kermanfroi, who was extremely necessitous, in the midst of his greatness.—Soon afterwards, Monseigneur discovered that there was a certain spot upon my estate, where a pond might be made, for which he found that he had great occasion; and he very modestly signified to me, that he should cause this piece of ground to be laid under water, and that he would either give me a piece of ground of the same value, or pay me for it according to the estimation of two persons whom he would appoint; but, that in case I refused this just and liberal offer, he should, as Lord Paramount, and of his own right and authority, make his pond by flooding my ground, according to law.

“I felt this proposal to be inconsistent with every principle of justice—In this spot was an old oak, planted by the first de Mer-

V O L. I N ville,

ville, who had bought the estate—It was under its shade that the happiest hours of my life had passed, while I was yet a child, and it had been held in veneration by all my family—I determined then to defend this favourite spot; and I hastened to a neighbouring magistrate, learned in the law—He considered my case, and then informed me, that, in this instance, the laws of Britany were silent, and that therefore, their deficiency must be supplied by the customs and laws of the neighbouring provinces—The laws of Maine and Anjou, said he, decide, that the *seigneur* of the *fief*, may take the grounds of his vassal to make ponds, or any thing else, only giving him another piece of ground, or paying what is equivalent in money—As *precedent*, therefore, decides, that the same thing may be done in Britany, I advise you, Louis-Jean de Merville, to submit to the laws, and, on receiving payment, to give up your land to Monseigneur Raoul-Philippe-Joseph-

Joseph-Alexander-Cæsar Eriſpoé, Baron de Kermanfroi.

“It was in vain I repreſented that I had a particular taſte, or a fond attachment to this ſpot. My man of law told me that a vaſſal had no right to any taſte or attachment, contrary to the ſentiments of his lord—And, alas!—in a few hours, I heard the hatchet laid to my beloved oak—My fine meadow was covered with water, and became the receptacle for the carp, tench, and eels of Monſieur—And remonſtrances and complaints were in vain!—Theſe were only part of the grievances I endured from my unfortunate neighbourhood to this powerful Baron, to whom, in his miſerable and half furniſhed *chateau*, I was regularly ſummoned to do homage “upon faith and oath”—Till my oppreſſions becoming more vexatious and inſupportable, I took the deſperate reſolution of ſelling my eſtate, and throwing myſelf again upon the wide world—Paris, whither I repaired with the money for which I ſold it, was a theatre

so new, and so agreeable to me, that I could not determine to leave it till I had no longer the means left of playing there a very brilliant part ; when that unlucky hour arrived, I wandered into this country, and took up my abode with a relation, a farmer, who rents some land of Monseigneur the Count d'Hauteville, and here I have remained, at times, working, but oftener philosophizing, and not unfrequently regretting my dear oak, and the first agreeable visions that I indulged on taking possession of my little farm, before I was aware of the consequences of being a vassal of Monseigneur Raoul-Philippe-Joseph-Alexander-Cæsar Erispoé, Baron de Kermanfroi, and indeed sometimes repenting that I did not wait a little longer, when the revolution would have protected me against the tyranny of my very illustrious neighbour."

De Merville here ended his narrative, every word of which I found to be true ; and I could not but marvel at the ignorance

rance or effrontery of those who assert that the *noblesse* of France either possessed no powers inimical to the general rights of mankind, or possessing such, forbore to exert them. The former part of his life bears testimony to *the extreme benefits accruing from war, and cannot but raise a wish, that the power of doing such extensive good to mankind, and renewing scenes so very much to the honor of reasonable beings, may never be taken from the princes and potentates of the earth.* I thus endeavour, dear Bethel, by entering into the interests of those I am with, to call off my thoughts from my own, or I should find this very long space of time, in which I have failed to receive letters from England, almost insupportable.

At the very moment I complain, I see my servant Warham approaching the house—I fly, impatiently, to receive news of Geraldine, of you, of all I love; and hope to have a long, a very long letter to write, in answer, to-morrow, to those I expect from you—We go back to Mont-

the next day, this will therefore be the last
pacquet you will receive from hence.

LIONEL DESMOND.

Note. The latter part of this narrative is a sort of free translation of parts of a little pamphlet, entitled, "Histoire d'un malheureux Vassal de Bretagne, écrite par lui-même," in which the excessive abuses to which the feudal system gave birth, are detailed.

L E T.

L E T T E R XIV.*

T O M R. B E T H E L.

Montfleuri, October 10, 1793

WHAT did I say to you, dear Bethel, in my letter of the 29th of August, that has given you occasion to rally me so unmercifully about Madame de Boisselle; and to predict my *cure*, as you call it—I cannot now recollect the contents of that letter, but of this I am sure, that I never was more fondly attached to the lovely woman, from whom my destiny has divided me, than at this moment; or ever saw the perfections of other women with more indifference—Were it possible for you, my friend, to comprehend the anguish of heart which I have felt ever since your last letters gave me such an account of the

* Answer to letter XI.

situation of Verney's affairs—You might be convinced, that time, absence, and distance, have had no such effect in altering my sentiments ; and that the sister of my friend Montfleuri, were she even as partial to me, as some trifling occurrences I have related, may have led you to imagine, can never be to me more than an agreeable acquaintance—far from being able to detach my mind from the idea of Geraldine's situation—I have undergone continual rillery from Montfleuri, for my extreme dejection, ever since I heard it—If these distressing scenes should become yet more alarming, I shall return to England—There I shall, at least, learn the progress of that ruin, which, though I cannot wholly prevent, I may, perhaps, soften to her, for whose sake alone, I deprecate its arrival—Restless and wretched, I left Hauteville, hardly conscious of the progress of my journey ; and since I came hither, have had a return of that lurking fever which made
my

my health one pretence for my quitting England.

Montfleuri is not here, but was detained by business at Aiguemont—I expect him to-morrow; and shall then determine whether to bend my course southward with him, or northward, on my return to England. I cannot describe to you how wretched I am—Surely, you never loved, or you would not ridicule feelings so acute as mine—Nor would you suppose that I should think about my fortune, if the sacrifice of any part of it could secure the peace and competence of a being for whom I could lay down my life. I intended to have continued a little narrative of all that happens to me—of the persons I meet—and of the conversation I hear—but your raillery has changed my purpose. Of whom can I speak here, but of Josephine and Julie; and if I tell you that they wept with pleasure on my arrival, and have since exerted themselves, with unceasing solicitude, to divert the melancholy they cannot

cannot but perceive—You would again renew that strain of ridicule about the former, which I so little like to hear—This prevents my telling you of a walk which Josephine engaged me to take with her last night to the ruin on the hill, of which, I believe, I gave a slight description in some former letter—nor will I, for the same reason, relate the conversation that passed there—When seating herself on a piece of a fallen column, she began, after a deep sigh, and with eyes swimming in tears, to relate to me the occurrences of her unfortunate life.

Could I help listening to such a woman?—Could I help sympathizing in sorrows which she so well knows how to describe?—Alas! when she complains that her mother betrayed her into marriage with a man, for whom it was impossible she ever could either feel love or esteem—When she dwells on all the miseries of such a connection, on the bitterness with which her life is irrecoverably dashed—The similarity of her
fate

fate to that of Geraldine, awakens in my mind a thousand subjects of painful recollection, and fruitless regret—My tears flow with hers; and she believes those emotions arise from extreme sensibility, which are rather excited by the situation of my own heart.

This kind of conversation so entirely engrossed us last night, that I heeded not the progress of time; and the sun had been for some time sunk behind those distant mountains that bound the extensive prospect from the eminence we were upon, before I recollected that we had a river to cross, and a very long walk home.

When these circumstances occurred to me, I suddenly proposed to Madame de Boisselle to return—She had then been shedding tears in silence, for some moments, and starting from the melancholy attitude in which she sat, she took my hand, and gently pressing it, said, as I led her among the masses of the fallen buildings that impeded our path—“ To
 6 the

the unhappy, sympathy and tenderness, like your's, is so seducing, that I have even trespassed on the indulgence your pity seems willing to grant me—I, perhaps have too tediously dwelt on incurable calamities, and called off your thoughts too long from pleasanter subjects and happier women!"—I answered—(not, I own, without more emotion than I wished to have shewn) that I had indeed listened....

Dear Bethel, I here broke off, on receiving intelligence that a messenger from Marseilles had a paquet to deliver to me. I hurried to meet him, and received from a man sent exprefs, the letter I enclose, from Anthony, Waverly's old servant.

As I am not sure that my presence in England can be useful to Geraldine, and have some hopes that at Marseilles, it may yet save her brother, I shall therefore hasten thither; but, at the earnest entreaty of the ladies of this family, I shall wait till noon to-morrow, by which time Montfleuri will certainly be returned. I have
therefore

therefore dispatched my servant to the next post house to order four horses hither to-morrow—I have no hope that Waverly will yield to reason, but his fluctuating character, which is usually so much against him, is here my only reliance—Direct your letters, till you hear from me again, to the care of Messieurs Duhamel and Bergot, at Marseilles; and do not, I beseech you, my dear friend, trifle with my unhappiness, but give me as exact an account as you can collect of Verney's affairs. As soon as possible I hope to hear from you.

Your's affectionately, ever,

LIONEL DESMOND.

L E T-

L E T T E R X V.*

TO LIONEL DESMOND, ESQUIRE.

S I R.

Marfales. O&tr. 7th, 1790.

HOPING you will excuse this freedom—this is to let you know, that Master changed his mind as to joining your honors party at my lord the Count of Hotte-vills as he promised faithfully, and instead thereof, fet out with the gentlemen as he was with for this place ; where they have introduced him to a family as is come to settle near here since the troubles in the capitol ; which is, a mother, a son and two daughters. And master have lived with this family all's one as if it were his home—I know no harm of the females—they are handsome young women—that is the two daughters : but the son, tho he appears so grand and fashinable, is as I

* Inclosed in the foregoing.

hear a fort of a sharpening chap—or what we call in England a black legs—He has won a good deal of money of master, as I have reason to think; but that does not altogether signify so much as the intention they have persuaded him into amongst them, to marry one of the mam-felles; which if something does not happen to make him change his mind he will certainly do out of hand—I can assure you honour'd Sir, I never knew master so long in the same mind ever since I have been in his service as upon this occasion—And I thought proper to let you know, because I am certain that my old lady, nor no part of his relations could like of this thing, and particularly his sister Mrs. Verney, who said so much to him in my hearing about being drawn in to marry, and advised him by all means to consult you, before ever he resolved upon any scheme whatever—I was so bold as to tell this to my master, who was not angry indeed with me, as he is a very good natured gentleman:

man : but he ask'd if so be I thought that he was to be always a child in leading strings.

I thought it best, seeing this affair is still going on to advertise your honor of it ; and if you think it proper to put an end thereto by your hinterference I think that there is no time to be lost.

From Sir

Your dutiful humble servant
to command

ANTHONY BOOKER.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



